What Bharatiya Vidya Stands for

Bharatiya Shiksha must ensure that no promising young Indian of character having faith in Bharat and her culture Bharatiya Vidya should be left without modern educational equipment by reason merely of want of funds

2, Bharatiya Shiksha must be formative more than informative, and cannot have for its end mere acquisition of knowledge Its legitimate sphere is not only to develop natural talents but so to shape them as to enable them to absorb and express the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya

3 Bharatiya Shiksha must take into account not only the full growth of a student s personality but the totality of his relations and lead him to the highest *self-fulfilment* of which he is capable

4 Bharatiya Shiksha must involve at some stage or other an intensive study of Sanskrit or Sanskritic languages and their literature, without excluding, if so desired, the study of other languages and literature, ancient and modern

आ नो भद्रा क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वत ।

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

—Rigveda, I-89-1

FACETS OF INDIAN CULTURE

BY

R SRINIVASAN

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

FACETS OF INDIAN CULTURE

BY

R SRINIVASAN

1980

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN

KULAPATI K M MUNSHI MARG

BOMBAY - 400 007

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Prof. R. Srinivasan's valuable book "FACETS OF INDIAN CULTURE" on the different facets of our ageless culture has always been in great demand but its reprint could not be taken up earlier owing to a peculiar combination of unforeseen circumstances.

Educational Departments of some States have prescribed this as a text-book for their Higher Secondary Course.

Despite the steep rise in the cost of production, we have decided to publish this edition on a no-profit no-loss basis so as to make the copies available to the student community at as moderate a price as possible.

June 16, 1980

KULAPATI'S PREFACE

THE Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan—that Institute of Indian Culture in Bombay—needed a Book University, a series of books which, if read, would serve the purpose of providing higher education Particular emphasis, however, was to be put on such literature as revealed the deeper impulsions of India As a first step, it was decided to bring out in English 100 books 50 of which were to be taken in hand almost at once

It is our intention to publish the books we select, not only in English, but also in the following Indian languages Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam

This scheme, involving the publication of 900 volumes, requires ample funds and an all-India organisation The Bhavan is exerting itself to the utmost to supply them

The objectives for which the Bhavan stands are the reintegration of Indian culture in the light of modern knowledge and to suit our present-day needs and the resuscitation of its fundamental values in their pristine vigour

Let me make our goal more explicit

We seek the dignity of man, which necessarily implies the creation of social conditions that allow him freedom to evolve along the lines of his own temperament and capacities, we seek the harmony of individual efforts and social relations, not in any makeshift way, but within the frame-work of the Moral Order, we seek the creative art of life, by the alchemy of which human limitations are progressively transmuted, so that man may become the instrument of God, and is able to see Him in all and all in Him

The world, we feel, is too much with us Nothing would uplift or inspire us so much as the beauty and aspirations which such books can teach

In this series, therefore, the literature of India, ancient and modern, will be published in a form easily accessible to all Books from other literatures of the world, if they illustrate the principles we stand for, will also be included.

This common pool of literature, it is hoped, will enable the reader, eastern or western, to understand and appreciate currents of world thought, besides the movements of the Indian mind, which, though they flow through different linguistic channels, have a common urge and aspiration

Fittingly, the Book University's first venture is the *Mahabharata*, summarised by one of the greatest living Indians, C. Rajagopalachari, the second work is on a section of it, the *Gita*, by H V Divatia, an eminent jurist and a student of philosophy Centuries ago, it was proclaimed of the *Mahabharata* "What is not in it, is nowhere" After twenty-five centuries, we can use the same words about it. He who does not know it does not know the heights and depths of the soul, he misses the trials and tragedy and the beauty and grandeur of life.

The *Mahabharata* is not a mere epic, it is a romance, telling the tale of heroic men and women and of some who were divine, it is a whole literature in itself, containing a code of life, a philosophy of social and ethical relations, and speculative thought on human problems that is hard to rival but, above all, it has for its core the *Gita*, which is, as the world is beginning to find out, the noblest of scriptures and the grandest of sagas the climax of which is reached in the wondrous Apocalypse in the Eleventh Canto

Through such books alone, the harmonies underlying true culture, I am convinced, will one day reconcile the disorders of modern life

I thank all those who have helped to make this new branch of the Bhavan's activity successful

Queen Victoria Road,
New Delhi
October 3, 1951

K M MUNSHI

FOREWORD

Professor R Srinivasan is well-known for his expert knowledge in several branches of Art, Science and Philosophy Whether he deals with the mathematical and acoustical aspects of music or insists on the cultural importance of musical education or on intuitive originality and improvisation (Kalpana and Manodharma), whether he recounts the history of Natyakala and inveighs against its growing vulgarisation, whether he reviews the rituals and the mysticism attendant on the consecration and maintenance of temples (e g , his treatment of Ugraprathishta and Saumyaprathishta) or stresses (as he does in his article on Education) that science is curiosity about life, philosophy an attitude towards life, art is a wonder of life and religion is reverence for life (a very favourite thought of mine), Professor Srinivasan is equally interesting and equally thorough

Dealing with 'Drama as a form of Yoga', he remarks that the function of the dramatist is to give us typical experiences of various types of humanity and that he enlarges thereby the significance of people and events

One of the most arresting of the papers which he is now collating for publication, is that on the "Nature and Function of Intuition or Vignana" He outlines the significance of the several concepts termed respectively Manas, Buddhi, Gnana and Vignana He hopes that humanity will develop a new faculty of intuition which will interpret the phenomena of the world in a new way This, in fact, is exactly what is taking place in the higher reaches of science today and is demonstrated by the recent speculations of physicists and astronomers and remodelling of the older cosmology of the basis of relativity and the newer philosophy revolutionising older ideas of space, time, matter and energy.

As an educationist of long experience, Professor Srinivasan takes care to point out that disciplined freedom is alone the real freedom And in his paper on "The Gift of Free Will , he dwells on the thesis that man is the creator of his own destiny and his own absolute law-giver It is from this point of view that he deals with the problem of suffering

I was specially struck with his note on "Some Languishing Arts" including the puppet drama, the Kolam and the Navaratri Kolu

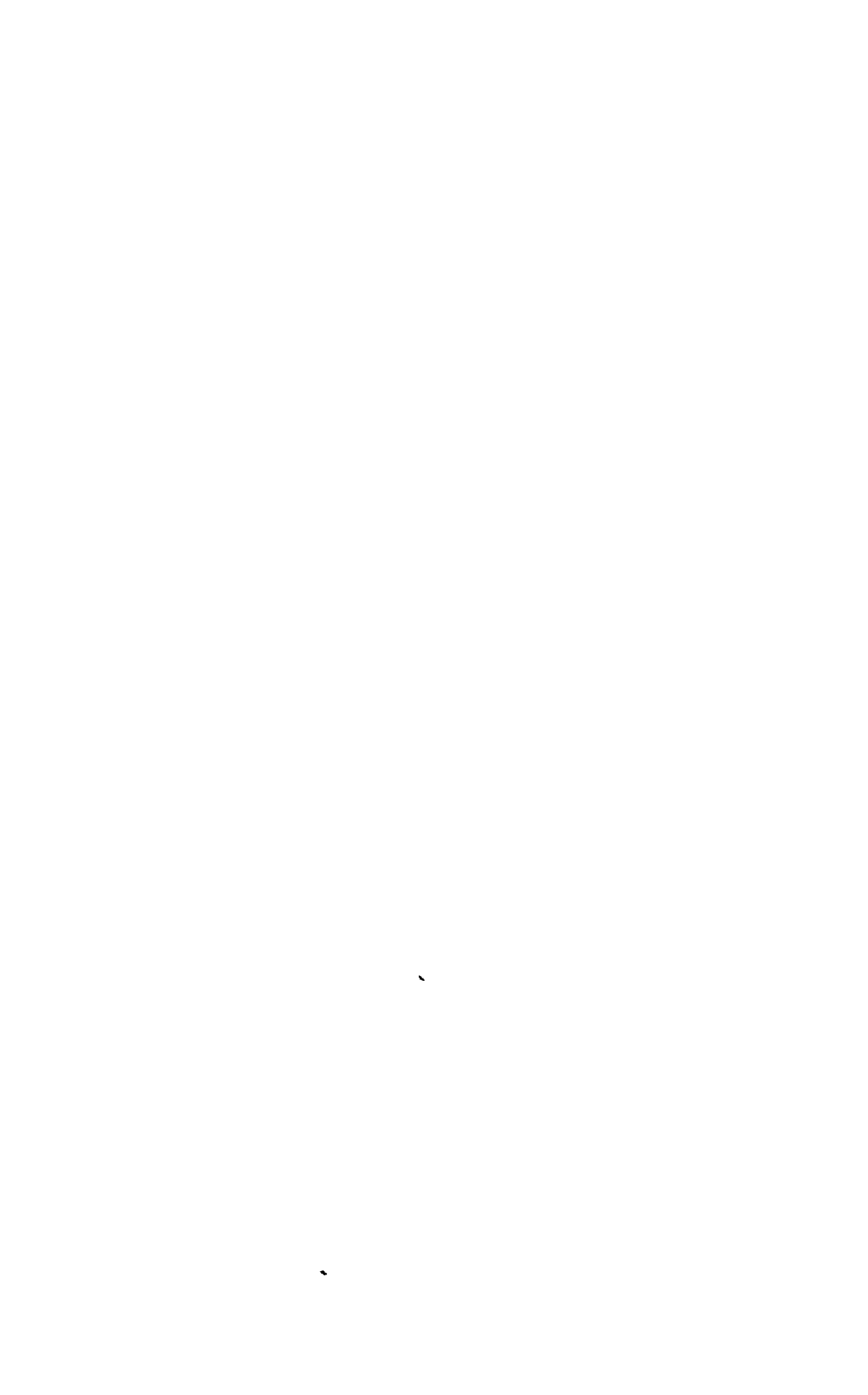
With a much-needed candour, the Professor, while indicating the importance of the Katha Kalakshepam, adverts to the danger of the modern Katha becoming, in his own language, a hotch-potch of indifferent music and low class humour

It is with great pleasure that I welcome the publication of the lectures and memoranda prepared during several years, which Professor Srinivasan is now collecting for the benefit of the public All that he has written is refreshingly stimulating and often displays real originality

Ootacamund,
20th July, 1960 C P RAMASWAMI AIYER

The writings of Professor R Srinivasan are all steeped in the spirit of our culture and are mainly concerned with the function of art as a means for the refinement of the human spirit, *atma-samskriti* The essays on music, drama and intuition are all learned and enlightening

I am delighted to know that Professor Srinivasan is maintaining his interest in Indian culture and spreading right ideas about it.

—S RADHAKRISHNAN

PREFACE

The articles, extracts and memoranda contained in this volume are a selection made from out of a number of articles and other pieces contributed to various papers and journals on various occasions In the circumstances a certain amount of repetition is inevitable But care has been taken to reduce overlapping to the minimum The articles will to some extent reveal my three great interests in life—what I call my three "M"s, Music, Mathematics and Mysticism I have tried to understand the soul of India's Culture through these aspects Art, Science and Religion in its deepest and most universal sense

The greatness, the uniqueness, of Indian Outlook lies in the value it sets on higher things, things relating to the soul It does not however neglect material concerns, it has made headway even in those directions But it has looked upon material comforts only as means to an end, it has never allowed these concerns to overshadow the higher and the more permanent aspects of a human being.

I cannot adequately express my gratitude to Sir C P Ramaswami Aiyer for the exceedingly kind-hearted foreword which he has written He is a true son of India and is gifted with a big heart. I thank him most warmly for his kindness My sincere thanks are also due in abundant measure to Sir S Radhakrishnan, the philosopher-politician who, in the midst of his heavy and unceasing duties, found time to go through my articles and write such kind words of appreciation He is an apostle of India's Philosophy and Culture, I feel greatly honoured by his warm appreciation I am very grateful to him

What shall I say about the Bharatiya Vidva Bhavan which has come forward to publish the book? I am tongue-tied

It is only in keeping with their tradition to stand by and help to keep the old Culture of India undimmed and guard it against unwholesome onslaughts My heart-felt gratitude goes to them in an unlimited measure

Madras,
11th September, 1960 R SRINIVASAN

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DEDICATED TO

The RISHIS of ARYAVARTA,

The Guardians of her Wisdom and Culture

Part I

MUSIC

1 Music A Science or an Art?

Is music a science or an art? The answer to this question naturally depends on the meanings we give to the words Music, Science and Art. Music is said to be highest of the fine arts and that is true This implies that music is Art *par excellence* Does this mean that it is not a Science?

Now, let us consider what we mean by science and by art In the East the connotations of these words are more comprehensive and overlapping than in the West The Sanskrit words that correspond to the words science and art are Shastra or Vidya and Kala According to Hindu conceptions, there are 14 Vidyas and 64 Kalas I do not wish to go into details in this matter Suffice it to say, that, generally speaking, *Vidya* is primarily the knowledge of God and by implication it also means branches of knowledge leading to this goal On the other hand, *Kala* covers almost all other branches of knowledge such as chemistry, biology, archery and the fine arts It is worth noting that music is included both under *Vidyas* and *Kalas*, as Gandharva Vidya and Sangeet Kala It may therefore be safely inferred that the Eastern conception of music was that it had two aspects one spiritual and the other aesthetic. But in the history of the development of music, the latter aspect has been in a way subsidiary to the former The ultimate function of music was to help the votary towards self-realisation or God-realisation

A little thought will show that from the Hindu standpoint the demarcation between *Vidya* and *Kala* is somewhat arbitrary, inasmuch as all knowledge must in the ultimate lead to the realisation of the great mystery of God, Man and the Universe They speak of *Para Vidya* and *Apara Vidya*, but both are *Vidyas* all the same In almost all

branches of knowledge, we have this duality, the direct and the indirect, the inductive and the deductive, the rational and the intuitional, and so on Ultimate realisation cannot be only along one path Science and art in their ultimate phases achieve the same or similar objects but their methods are quite different one from the other, in some respects almost antithetic.

ART IS EMOTIONAL

Science and Art, as understood in the modern days have distinctive connotations which can be compared and contrasted Science being essentially related to intellect and mind and Art to emotion and intuition, it would look as if they can have nothing in common In fact, Edward Carpenter goes so far as to say, "As far as a Drama, a Picture or a Poem merely convey intelligence of new thoughts or ideas, they are not Art. To be artistic they must excite emotion People sometimes ask, what is the meaning of such and such a work? Meaning be hanged!" Science is based on intellectual analysis, while Art is essentially related to emotion and is synthetic in its outlook Science lays emphasis on definition, but artistic experience escapes definition, in fact it belongs to an aspect of human nature which evades such definition The field of science is generally objective, but it is subjective experience that is the prime factor in art Science is impersonal while art is essentially personal with ample scope for improvisation and originality In the case of science, there may be a purely theoretic side having no bearing on actual phenomena (as for example, the various geometries which are really only logical systems), but in art a theory which has no bearing on practice has no place

THE SAME GOAL

In spite of these differences they lead to the same Goal From various observations, the scientist reaches some generalisations and deduces fundamental laws, the artist

leads us from the known to the unknown, the seeming to the being and helps us to get a glimpse of the Great Thought behind the phenomena which are material expressions of that Thought. Great portrait painters paint not only the individual but the type to which he belongs, the type to which several others similar to him belong Great dramatists generalise the experiences of particular characters and place before us typical experiences Great poets in a similar way generalise human emotions Thus the artists enable us to have vicariously as it were, a variety of experiences and benefit by them This generalising element, this going from the concrete to the abstract, from the objective to the subjective, from the apparent to the real, from variety to unity, is common to both science and art To put it in other words, both help us to glimpse the mind of God behind the phenomenal world, one through intellect and the other through intuition

But all the same, science is science and art is art, their methods are different, though one can help the other by giving a balanced background Music is essentially and undoubtedly an *Art* though it mav utilise the methods of science for purposes of codification for the benefit of the rank and file This is something like the grammar aspect of a language Grammar can never produce good literature, rather, it may hamper it. Language is more fundamental, it it a living aspect of human intercourse, grammar is only a code, a record of certain standard forms adopted by great literary geniuses A poet does not care a straw for our grammar, grammar may stifle a poet, and he rebels and breaks through the prisonhouse of grammar into spacious realms of poetic fantasies, untrammelled by any conventional fetters.

THE PLACE OF SCIENCE IN MUSIC

It is the same with music. What is called the science of music is only its grammar, even in a more limited sense

When Bharata named his great treatise on Dance and Music as *Natyasastra*, the *science* of *Natyu*, he must have had only some such idea No number of books, however eminent their authors may be, can give pleasure to your ear or move your heart as a sweet song A treatise on cookery will not satisfy your tongue or fill your stomach Art is fundamentally practical, it is the practice of art that gives the aesthetic reaction we associate with art A treatise, a lecture or an article on Art may satisfy our mind but can never produce emotional reaction, nor lead to aesthetic experience. In dealing with music, we have to keep this constantly in mind

RULES SHOULD NOT CRIB ART

In the development of musical art it is the *lakshya* that is the soul of the art, and *lakshana* comes in only for purposes of codification As an art develops, there comes a time when the *lakshana* assumes too much importance and domineers over *lakshya*, that is the period of greatest danger to Art, when form dominates and stifles the life side of art. Art then becomes a formal affair without any inspiration or creative urge While rules based on the experience of great inspired persons are useful for those who are not so gifted, they should never be allowed to usurp the place of creative work Rules have a place in art as long as they help the preservation of the basic elements of the art, the moment they become aggressive and interfere with the creative urge of the artist, they must be curbed and relegated to their proper place

The main difficulty with us in India is that we are a bit too intellectual and allow our rational faculty to intrude where it has no place Music being essentially an art related primarily to human emotions and intuition, an art in which inner feeling and creative urge are of paramount

importance, to make it a field for intellectual analysis and mental delectation is to misunderstand its true function

LAYA IS SECONDARY

In the case of Karnatic Music, I have noticed of late certain tendencies which indicate the intellectual usurpation of the function of art. The South Indian's make-up especially, is such that he is not satisfied with art discharging its legitimate functions only and giving him pure aesthetic enjoyment and emotional sublimation, he wants also to get some intellectual satisfaction This is specially noticeable in the great interest evinced by the average South Indian concrt-goer in the *tala* instruments and their manipulations *Laya* is certainly an important factor in our music, it is said that *shruti* is the mother and *laya* the father of music This is true, the mother nourishes the child and helps its growth, the father guides the child under loving discipline The simile is remarkably appropriate But when *laya* degenerates into arithmetical manipulation without any reference to aesthetic reaction it ceases to be art or even an appendage to art. In special displays on *mridangam, kanjira, ghatam* and other *tala* instruments, complicated arithmetical manipulations (sometimes even challenging the metronome !) accompanied by tympanum-breaking medley of loud sound draw applause from the audience The inference is obvious!

CORRECT TREATMENT OF SWARAS AND RAGAS

Another noticeable tendency is the undue importance given to *swara* singing Next to *neraval*, *swaras* have an aesthetic function to perform In any item of singing, the *bhava* is the most important thing It often happens that *kalpana swara* groupings become a mechanical jumble of *swara* without appropriate *bhava*, the form dominates the life. I have often seen young, immature singers who can-

not sing even well-known major ragas like Todi, Kamboji in proper style, indulging in swara-spouting!

So also, in *Ragalapana*, singers elaborate ragas in a mechanical way without any regard to correct *bhava* Some ragas lend themselves to elaborate *alapana*, while others do not so lend themselves Even some *melaragas* are only nominal ragas, they have little distinctive individuality or bhava; for example, *melaragas* like Tanarupi, Rupavati, Varunapriya, Yagapriya Salagam, Gavambhodi, Viswambari are only names, even melas like Suryakantam, Bhavapriya, Sulini, in which there are current pieces, cannot be elaborated like, say, *Mohana*, *Kamboji*, *Sahana*, which are *janyaragas* Every item in a music concert has to be chosen only for its aesthetic merit and not for a display of mathematical permutations and combinations There is a tendency towards degeneracy in this direction.

The advent of the mike has brought in its train untold possibilities of deterioration in our music. The essential and distinctive features of our music, the delicacy, subtlety, the fine waves and trills which make our music, all these have begun to decay, mere loudness and throaty pyrotechnics are at a premium Quality is yielding place to quantity, subtle graces are being replaced by loud and broad effects In short, many of the features which make for the greatness of the art are neglected I feel that mechanisation, while useful in some spheres of human activity, ought not to be allowed into the realm of art. If this state of affairs continues, the creative artist who really makes and keeps alive true art will go into oblivion God save us from such a catastrophe!

VENKATAMAKHI'S RAGA SCHEME

One word here about the 72-melakarta scheme of Venkatamakhi will not be out of place. The world of music owes a deep debt of gratitude to him His intention was

to regularise correct *lakshya* and present a general framework which will be, in one sense, all-inclusive He never himself believed that all the theoretical ragas possible from that scheme had artistic significance While he mentioned 72 as a theoretic possibility, he handled only about 20 *mela-ragas* The book *Ragalakshana* which gives the names and characteristics of these 72 *melas* and which is attributed to him, could not have been written by him at all, evidently it was written by someone later on and added to *Chaturdandiprakashika* What has actually happened is that later musicians tried to make an Art out of a theoretical scheme or frame work and treat about *ragas* which, though they may be the abstract parents of some *ranjaka janyas*, cannot lay any claim to be artistic entities Some of these *ragas* may have some theoretic interest, but it is an open question whether they have any artistic claims I do not for a moment mean that we should confine ourselves only to the 19 and odd melas of old, far from it! I want growth and increasing content in an art output But the best should always be on the basis of Art and not on mere theoretical considerations The coat should fit the child, the latter should not be made to conform to a standardised coat. Similarly, when Venkatamakhi spoke of the 12 *swarasthanas* based on 22 shrutis in an octave, he never visualised *swaras* as fixed points No evaluation of the actual ratios of the vibrations of the various swaras and shrutis was attempted, for the simple reason that the artistic value of a *swara* in a raga did not depend so much on its vibrational value as on how it was handled and what stresses and variations it was subjected to It is only rarely that a note is used in its pure invariable form This is responsible for the difficulty one experiences in setting our music to notation in *exact* terms

To sum up, music is essentially an Art, but it uses the methods of science for its own purposes, never allowing

aspects cannot but be fascinated with a study of the evolution of our musical ideas leading up to the present A knowledge of this background will help one to handle the present day music in correct form and in right perspective

2 *Mathematical* A study of shruti-intervals is greatly helped by mathematics Also the possibilities of further evolution of our raga system and tala system can be explored with the help of mathematics Without actually counting one by one we can say how many janya ragas of a given pattern can be derived from a scale In tala manipulation it is mainly a matter of arithmetic, but aesthetic considerations limit our choice An elementary knowledge of permutations and combinations will be of benefit in this line of study Just as a problem worked at a desk by a scientist led to the discovery of the planet Neptune, it is quite possible that some purely mathematical relation may suggest some new possibility in the field of music Mathematics and music have gone hand in hand in ancient Greece. Plato insisted on a knowledge of music and mathematics on the part of any one who sought admission to his school Similarly Pythagoras laid down the condition that a would-be pupil should know geometry and music I frequently refer to the three 'M' s, Music, Mathematics and Mysticism, music and mathematics together lead to true mysticism

3 *Scientific* (Acoustics) Music is based on sound and a knowledge of sound from a scientific standpoint will be an advantage. For a performance to be completely effective several factors need to be considered and utilised Voice production (of the kind required for the particular system of music in view) can be done scientifically *more* quickly than otherwise The concert hall has to satisfy certain conditions if the music performed is to come out at its best.

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Especially in dealing with musical instruments and their structure some scientific knowledge comes in handy A knowledge of the quality of the material used, of the principles underlying *resonance*, of the laws of vibrations of strings and air-columns and such other matters is very valuable Of course some people' deal with instruments in an empirical way, but a scientific approach will save time and ensure correctness

4 *Geographical* Some persons may wonder where geography comes in here But a little thought will explain the point It is a well-known fact that climatic conditions of a place have a great influence on the voice and the materials used for instruments It has been observed that in certain areas the voice has a natural tendency to be nasal, the climate at times influences even vocal inflexions The languages spoken in these areas bear the stamp of this climatic influence Similarly in some climates the average voice is subdued, soft and mellow while in some other places it is bold, vibrant and forceful This is an interesting branch of study which it is worthwhile to take up for serious research

5 *Psychological* All fine arts directly act on human emotions and music especially has profound influence on our inner nature, feelings and thoughts This has been recognised at all times Ragas, or melody moulds, are unique aesthetic entities, each with its characteristic influence and emotional effect To subdue an angry cobra, to calm a truculent child, to quieten a troubled mind, music is an effective weapon The vibrations set up by music do not stop with the ear, they induce vibrations in our subtle nature, the entire human nature is affected by them This aspect has not received much attention There are many yet unrecognised effects of music whose study will yield wonderful results, a new vista of knowledge will open out, to be put to use for the welfare of human society The power

of music to cure diseases has been recognised in ancient times Muhammad Hafid deals in detail with the therapeutics of music and gives hints for the use of certain musical scales for certain diseases * A Chinese book speaks thus of good music —" under the effect of music, the five social duties are without admixture, the eyes and the ears are clear, the blood and the vital spirits are balanced, habits are reformed, customs are improved, the Empire is in complete peace" Here is a fascinating line of study and research of great practical value

6 *Pedagogy* The teaching of music is another interesting branch of musical studies This subject has received little attention so far There is no point in bemoaning the passing away of the old *gurukula* system We cannot bring it back. An intelligent system of musical instruction related to the nature of the musical art on the one hand and the psychology of the learner on the other has to be evolved. Nowadays people who study music are not all out to become professionals, many study the art in the College stage with a view to acquire the power of intelligent appreciation of the art and help its cultural growth Hence the accent in such cases is on the cultural rather than on the performing side. So the scheme of musical studies has to be planned so as to meet the needs of the various groups of people who come to study music

Musicology deals with all these aspects and many more.

But all this will not serve any useful purpose unless it helps the art to grow and expand into wider fields and "pastures new" The performing artist is as important for this progress as the musicologist, these two groups must co-operate and work in amity, only then the progress of

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*Note -Vide article on "Doctors now use Musical Therapy"

the art on right lines will be assured I have often heard people belittle the value of musicology and ask, "Where does all this theory and academic study lead us to? We are concerned with the art as practised If a person without bothering his head about all this musicology can sing well and correctly will that not do? After all the final aim is to sing or play well" Quite so In music we have always had the lakshya and the lakshana, and it has been held that lakshya is the more important But what maintains the correct standards in lakshya is lakshana For the proper development of music lakshya and lakshana must go together I know there are some who can sing a raga very well, without any knowledge of swara We say, he sings from "lakshya" They are popular singers too But can we call them "musicians"? Certainly not, we may call them singers Some children learn to sing from hearing gramophone records, some of them have good voice and reproduce the record with remarkable accuracy Can we on that account say that they know music? Something more than mere skill in singing is needed to make "music" out of "singing" And so our ancients called music a *vidya* as well as a *kala* Fundamental principles covered by musicology find adequate and proper expression in practical music One should help the other, to divorce one from the other is the greatest disservice one can do to the Great Muse of Art Books on music which have come down to us from our forefathers are all books on *lakshana*, are treatises on musicology and not books of songs written in swara-tala notation We value them because they are *lakshana-granthas* The lack of co-operation between the musicologist and the performing musician (the professionals) ,which characterises the present day world of music has led to an undesirable state of affairs In the words of Mr K. V Ramachandran, "Intuition is all but dead and the materials of the art are lying about us in chaotic confusion, not understood and not cared for

and the art has stopped at the level of the professional executant, with whom the art is a means to an extra-musical end The executant is like an actor preoccupied with the tricks of manner and inflexions of voice, more than the message of music Without wishing to decry the human media through which the art has to propagate itself, one may distinguish between the art and its handmaid, between music and the musician who interprets it The professional musician is too much in the picture and he has revealed an amazing capacity to throw music itself into the background We do not engage an actor to expound the drama or literature, but for expound and interpreting music we invariably choose a singer or player, forgetting that there are vast domains of knowledge beyond his ken, with which he is not only not familiar, but which he has never cared to equip himself with It is just here that the musicologist of the *right kind* could render valuable services" He goes on to say, "One need not be surprised that under the present day conditions our music which was once a hyper-aesthetic poetry, has turned prosy and bids fair to end itself as a debased and impoverished jargon, and all theoretical disagreements of the present just relate to the tweedledum and tweedledee of that jargon" When we think of the dramatic art we think of Kalidasa, Bhavahhuti, Shakespeare, Goethe and so on and not of particular actors who acted the drama and rendered the characters But in the music of the present day undue accent is laid on the "performing" to the neglect of the inspired art of which the performer is, (in most cases, an inadequate) exponent. Inspired makers and codifiers of music will remain for ever as great figures in the pages of history while popular singers may be forgotten Music, because its appeal is primarily to human emotions, cannot cut itself away from intellect It is in the synthesis of Intellect

and Emotion that Intuition, which is above both but includes both, is born

It is a mistake to think that musicology has nothing to do with practical music It is just the other way about. It has a direct bearing and exerts a wholesome influence on the practice of music A performing musicologist will be a great asset Many of the pitfalls into which the ordinary professional sometimes falls would be easily avoided Several deficiencies which we note in the concerts of the present day would not be there if the singer were a musicologist also I do not propose to detail all these deficiencies Let me however just refer to a few noticeable flaws The primary function of Art is to produce maximum effect with minimum effort The whole concert will have to be well thought out and planned to serve this end Frequently we find things happening the other way, with tremendous effort the musician produces poor effect He must study himself, take note of his limitations and strong points and so blend them as to produce an aesthetic effect If there is a handicap of the voice he has to use his knowledge of acoustics to produce the right kind of voice (of course, subject to inborn limitations) Each one has some special best, he has to explore and find that line and concentrate upon it and make his special contribution Improvisation and originality *(Kalpana, Manodharma)* are the very life of our music A musician should always be on the look-out for discovering some new rendering, some new way of presentation, some new phrasings revealing some hidden beauties in the raga and so on Even in arranging the programme of a concert the various items have to be chosen with a view to aesthetic effect I have seen several concerts being flat solely on account of a badly arranged programme It is not my idea here to give any suggestions on programme-making Fore-thought is necessary and also some knowledge of human psychology The performer should feel

en rapport with the audience, sense their raction and use his art to pull them along with him Of course all this requires a certain degree of culture and musicology just supplies that useful and indispensable element

3 Democracy and Creative Music

These are days when the taste for music has spread far and wide and people in general hunger for the particular form of enjoyment which music gives While this is a healthy sign from one stand-point it may not be altogether an unmixed blessing if viewed from a different angle One of the most effective expressions of the soul of a nation is through her music and when there is a general renaissance in the life of a nation this is evidenced also in her musical expression

Music (as well as other fine arts) was in the past a privilege of a chosen few, kings, zemindars and rich people patronised music and musicians The musician had no anxiety about his livelihood He was free to pursue his art and keep it pure and high, irrespective of the demands of the people. It was, as it were, only by sufferance that the masses had occasion to listen to these masters But all that has now changed As with many other things music also has passed on from the hands of the aristocratic few to the general mass Music Sabhas and other similar organisations have made it possible for the man in the street to enjoy music as much and as heartily as the zemindars or maharajas of old Musicians are much in demand and one may say their needs in life are assured, at least in most cases.

But—and it is a big "but"—what is the effect of this democratisation on the art of music? Now the patronage has shifted from the few to the many The average musician of to-day cannot entirely depend upon the patronage

of the aristocracy He looks for his support to the people at large, and so has to keep them in good humour The result is obvious However intense and sincere the desire of the public for encouraging music may be, the moment the standard of high class music is left entirely to be determined by the mass of hearers, the art is bound to deteriorate An honest musician, who on the one hand desires to be true to the ideals of traditional Indian Music and on the other wishes to please the hearers has to live a life of compromise between the ideals and the actual necessities of life After all, one may ask, can the public claim to have the vision and inner equipment, that power of grasping the subtleties of our musical system, necessary to lay down the law for the Vidwans? The answer cannot but be unanimous There are certain things in life, not of the material of mundane variety, which can only be appreciated from a distance in a general way by the mass, it is given only to a few to get at the inner vital centre of an art system and assimilate and reveal its meaning to the public at large. And so music lovers and those who are interested in keeping our musical system pure and unimpaired owe a duty to meet this problem in the face and find a solution.

Another aspect of the matter which has also to be considered is this We have plenty of artists, some of them in the top rank They sing well and to the proper standard and people also appreciate them in a way But are we having many *creative* artists in the true sense of the word? One of the striking features of our music is that while it is apparently hemmed in on all sides by rules and regulations it is at the same time so elastic, so full of possibilities of improvement, and so remarkably capable of *Mano-dharma* (creative improvisation) To quote Leopold Stokowki, "While giving due consideration to tradition stemming from the past, Indian Music is free and improvised, so that all powers of imagination in the musician are

brought into play In this way the music of India is always creative, never a mere reproduction of what is written or played" But how many of our professionals can claim to be truly creative in this sense? I am afraid not many On the other hand some of them, even at the top of the profession, lack the necessary general culture so indispensable to a creative artist. They show a tendency to go along the line of least resistance and condemn all creative attempts as spurious or heterodox. This is a natural tendency, but in the wider interest of the art we have to guard ourselves against it, especially in Southern India where unfortunately few of the professionals at the top happen to possess high cultural attainment and so they convert a plastic and overgrowing art into a rigid intellectual system This danger is a real factor to count But I believe that the soul of India is not dead, however sluggish her pulse beats may be in certain departments of her cultural expression She will see to it that her musical art, which is the pride of the world, continues to maintain its position unaffected by any of the onslaughts which are made on many of her cultural expressions

4 Discipline and Freedom in Music

Some of the deepest truths of life are best expressed only in paradoxes, in apparently contradictory terms The Ultimate is described as bigger than the biggest and at the same time as smaller than the smallest, some of the attributes given by Science to aether are contradictory

When we talk of Freedom and Discipline in the same breath it may sound strange But a little thought will indicate that not only these two are not inconsistent but are complementary to each other Absolute freedom is an impossibility in the manifested universe If every one claimed absolute freedom the result will be chaos Our freedom in the world is conditioned by the freedom of others Disci-

plined freedom alone will lead to stability and progress. In fact any cultural achievement is the result self-imposed discipline The more we advance the more these self-imposed disciplines There lies the essential difference between man and beast The animal instinctively follows the two great natural urges, self-preservation and race preservation. As life evolves the individual takes himself in hand and minimises the time and attention he was giving to mere physical urges in his savage condition and releases more and more time and energy for higher pursuits His lower nature is subdued and made subservient to his higher nature The material side is well disciplined so that his spiritual nature may be more and more revealed The more the lower nature is disciplined the more the spirit is set free to reveal itself We may restate it thus Life expresses itself through form, the more the form subserves the purpose of the Life the greater the freedom of the Life.

This comes out clearly in Music It is often said about our Karnataka Music that the art suffers from too much of codified rules This is due to misunderstanding Of course there are rules and also there is tradition, and these two work in harmony to enable the art to achieve the highest. The most remarkable feature of our Music is that there is almost no limit to improvisation and still the rules would be followed Let me quote Leopold Stakowski He says,

> "One of the great characteristics of the Music of India to my mind is its flexibility and freedom While giving due consideration to traditions stemming from the past, Indian Music is free and improvised so that all powers of imagination in the musician are brought into play In this way the Music of India is always creative, never a reproduction of what is written or played, as sometimes happens with the Music of Western countries."

Nature is full of charm and beauty, but in what may be called random distribution It is the privilege of the artist to select from the abundance of nature's gift in beauty of sound, colour, form, and so on and give a new shape which will enhance that beauty a thousand-fold The artist makes a beautiful park out of the plants and flowers which grow in nature in forests luxuriously without a plan and design It is the creation of this beauty from raw material supplied by nature that is the true function of the artist And here comes the value of discipline, orderliness, plan and forethought Nature is full of pleasing sounds, but the musician selects such of them as can be built into a beautiful garland of sounds That is Music

The synthesis of freedom and discipline is best illustrated in Ragalapana The essential characteristics of the raga are given by tradition in the form of rules, and these bring out its individuality in unmistakable clarity But it is up to the artist to clothe it in his own way, to decorate it in a gorgeous jewellery or in simple costume, without however mutilating the essential individuality Let us take a child It has its individuality In whatever manner you dress it or bedeck it the child is the same There is no limit to the variety of ways in which you can ornament it, the exact manner of such an ornamentation is left to the imagination of the designer Something like this is what happens when artists elaborate ragas in their own way The more fertile the artist's imagination the more the variety of clothing and decoration in which the raga is trapped Here is an example of how perfect freedom and discipline can exist side by side and make for richer and grander art True Freedom is Cultural Freedom which is Disciplined Freedom

It has been said that, for Indian Music, *Shruti* (correct note-intervals) is the mother and *Laya* (Rhythm) father There is great truth behind this statement The mother is

the nourisher of the child, she lavishes all her love on it and perhaps sometimes over-does it with the result that it becomes a spoilt child The father sees to it that the progress of the child is not marred by the indulgence shown by the mother, he lays down the lines along which healthy progress of the child will be assured Taking the simile of the park, mother gathers the plants and flowers, the father lays the garden according to plan These two aspects correspond to the freedom and discipline sides of the art.

Unfortunately at times the value of both these functioning at the same time is lost sight of, over-emphasis is laid on the form side to the detriment of the soul of music, or it may be the other way But in any case the value of discipline lies in its helping the growth of art. If at any time this discipline misses its true mission and begins to encroach on the realm of the soul of Music, we have to stop it and confine discipline to its proper role. Such critical situations come now and then, and there is some sort of struggle for supremacy between the soul and form of Musical expression Generally the soul wins and then follows a period of steady progress till again perhaps another such situation comes up Thus it goes on, and the art progresses, though not always in a straight gradient, but in an undulating series of crests and falls each crest being slightly higher than the preceding crest. Such a progress is made possible only through disciplined freedom It is this freedom which is so essential for true Culture

5 Aesthetics of Rhythm or Laya Bhava

It has been said that Laya is the father and Shruti is the mother of music There is a great truth behind this While it is true that a mother tends and nourishes a child there is the danger of the child growing undisciplined and the father is supposed to supply this necessary element of

guiding and directing the activities of the child so that maximum effect can be achieved with minimum effort. This discipline makes all the difference not only in Music but in everything in life. The difference between undisciplined music and disciplined music is somewhat of the nature of the difference between a wild forest and a well-kept garden By proper discipline, pruning and trimming, what otherwise would have been merely a wild growth of nature is converted into a beautiful and attractive garden This is exactly what Laya (Tala) does in regard to our Music

I do not know whether in any other system of music in the world the Laya aspect plays such an important part as in Carnatic Music. It looks as if the South Indian mind revels in the intricacies of time measure This matter has been gone into thoroughly by ancients We hear of the 7 major talas, then the 35 talas, 175 talas, 108, 120 and so on, all these were developed on the basis of certain definite rules In addition to all these kinds of time measures, Shri Arunagiri Nathar has, in his famous 'Tirupugazh', introduced new varieties not covered by any of the ancient schemes Even now, we cannot say that one cannot improvise new kinds and compose pieces in these new varieties—the scope is almost unlimited Many of these talas have not only an academic interest but are in actual use and people in South India have grown to appreciate and enjoy them at least intellectually, if not entirely aesthetically

This leads us to the question of the two kinds of appeal in our music, the purely aesthetic and the intellectual Of course, music being the Queen of the Fine Arts is essentially related to our emotions The appeal of any Fine Art is primarily to our emotions and only secondarily to our intellect Our ancient scholars have recognised this speciality of our Music and in classifying knowledge as 'Vidya' and 'Kala' have placed Music under both these categories,

and Music, according to them, was both a Science and an Art in the general sense of the words Of course, this intellectual appeal of music is not entirely related to the pure rational faculty in us There is a tinge of emotion about this intellectual appeal So also for the aesthetic appeal there is some sort of an intellectual background Emotion in essence is not merely desire but is feeling stabilised by a touch of intellection, and so when we speak of the appeal of Music being essentially emotional there is an implication of also an element of intellectual appeal involved This is specially true of Carnatic music The tala aspect referred to above to some extent supplies this intellectual appeal, though it is possible to conceive the possibility of Tala alone being capable of emotional reaction

Tala is in essence based on measurement of time So Tala, Laya or Rhythm serves the purposes of regulating, guiding and disciplining Music with a view to enhance the aesthetic appeal As we know, all the phenomena in the world can ultimately be reduced to vibrations and the effect of vibrations and their power to cause unexpected results have been recognised By drawing a violin bow across the edge of a glass tumbler in a particular manner, one can break the tumbler into pieces We might have heard also of the practice of a marching body of soldiers breaking their steps when they cross a bridge It is known that in certain cases if the periodicity of their steps has a particular value the tread of the soldiers can break the bridge We may also in this connection remember our ancient belief that by *Mantras* properly chosen and intoned correctly we can produce wonderful results Bringing rain by prayer is an example It is said of the Raga Dipak that it can produce fire and so also the Megha Ranjani Raga can cause rain So we find in Nature periodicity is of great importance. Here we can see the importance of Rhythm It is a matter of long experience that a sound regularly repeated tends

one to sleep A lullaby quietens a restless child, even the rhythmic sound of a moving train lulls some people to slumber

The effect of Rhythm on our inner nature is not so well recognized as it ought to be There is as much Laya Bhava as Raga Bhava By changing Rhythm we can change the aesthetic appeal of a piece of music Why, even a change of tempo can cause variations in the aesthetic appeal, hence the importance of what is called *Kala Pramana* The time measure and the tempo have to be chosen to suit the particular piece, its wording, its sense, the Raga in which it is sung, the instrument on which it is played, the quality of the voice that sings and so forth It is well known that the same piece, which when played on Veena has to be somewhat drawn out, loses its effect on the flute unless the tempo is altered So also in the case of some human voices the tempo has to be lowered to bring out desired effect Each singer and instrumentalist has to choose the proper *Kala Pramana* to produce the best aesthetic effect of the piece of music sung or played This point does not seem to receive the attention which it deserves

In Dance, this rhythmic aspect is of paramount importance In the mere grouping of various rhythmic patterns lies the unlimited possibility of producing various kinds of aesthetic appeal It is well known that a dancer indicates a time measure with his (or her) feet, then he (or she) often changes the pattern and the effect is marvellous We feel thrilled by the sheer beauty of the change of rhythm pattern, (for example, when the foot is marking the Adi tala with the jati thakadhimi-thari-kita, he suddenly changes the pattern to thakita-thakita-thaka and the effect is remarkable) I am not now referring to the Abhinaya aspect of Dance where facial expressions and Mudras play a prominent part. In the other items of a Dance recital where emphasis is laid upon Rhythm, a study of the

emotional effects of various rhythm patterns and frequent changes of the pattern within a given tala mould is of great importance

6 Musical Musings

This article is not of the usual type, it may be heterodox and unconventional It does not propose to put forth any new ideas or suggestions for acceptance, nor does it propose to be the result of any serious high-brow research Some of my statements may go violently contrary to accepted ideas, they may upset some self-complacent minds It may startle some into violent opposition also But then that is the very object of this article It is meant to provoke thought, to irritate the grey cells of some brains to violent activity I do not for a moment expect my readers to agree with me In fact I do not want them to agree with me I court violent opposition, if that would mean active thought on the part of the opposers

The first law of Newton is true not only in the physical world of matter but in the mind world also There is as much mental inertia as physical inertia Though many may hesitate to acknowledge it, a little observation will indicate that generally our minds run along old grooves "That is our custom" is an oft quoted excuse for avoiding having to spend mental energy on a new line of thought "Tradition" is often used as such an excuse also Of course tradition is very valuable, it ensures and guarantees a continuity of those life impulses which make for the growth of Culture But when people speak of tradition it generally stands for all kinds of accretions which have gathered round the original life current in course of time, almost stifling it Mental complacency is the greatest enemy of any true advancement.

In the history of any art it is a matter of common experience that a certain stage is reached when the form

side and the life side compete for supremacy The impulse generated by inspired great people finds suitable forms of expression and as the impulse gets more and more vitalised it finds newer and richer forms of expression The expression is the form side and the impulse the life side of the art. Usually the impulse at the beginning is so strong that it controls the form in which it finds expression In course of time, men who follow the practice of that art slowly lose that living contact with the life impulse which is necessary to keep the form as a perfect expression of the life, with the result that the life side recedes to the background and the form side dominates Then the struggle begins between life and form, and often the form wins and life is stifled and the art becomes static In a recent article on "the Mirror of Gesture" Dr Mulk Raj Anand speaking of the Dance Art says "As codification always follows the arrival of a static tradition, the grammarian's attempt to record the 'mudras' and 'bhavas' of dance art also seems to show the beginning of the process of decay For skill in India has always been hereditary and the tradition of creative arts has been kept alive from father to son by mnemonic repetition or memory The composition of a code or a text was a much later process and probably happened when everything had become customary and the conventions were unalterably fixed" What Dr Anand says of the dance art is true of every art. The life of art is inspiration, and codification and inspiration are natural enemies

We often hear of 'lakshya' and 'lakshana' in regard to our music It has been said times out of number that 'lakshya' is the more important and 'lakshana grandhas' came to be written only when things got settled down to a routine as it were Lakshana codifies the static condition reached, presumably with the idea that the art has reached a settled and unchanging and unchangeable form A living art is always in a condition of flux It can never stagnate

deeper expressions of human personality Even among the melas which are sung nowadays as ragas some have only a sort of arithmetic interest and nothing more While on the contrary, some of the janya ragas and vakra ragas are charming and move the hearts of anyone who may be sensitive even to a slight extent Harikambodhi is a mela Yedukula Kambodhi, Mohana and Kedaragowla are derivatives from it In the scale of aesthetics how can the mela stand anywhere near these derived ragas? The ragas are the outcome of inner emotional experiences and they take shape according to those experiences, some of them are simple and straight, others are a little more complicated, and still some others are greatly involved The ragas corresponding to these experiences will also have corresponding outer forms This is how ragas have evolved and not according to a preconceived intellectual framework.

We know that Maha Vaidhyanatha Iyer composed the famous 'Lakshana Gita' in 72 melakartas But what about its aesthetic appeal? Except for the fact that some of our vidwans air some sections of this occasionally, perhaps to impress their superior knowledge, what aesthetic appeal can be claimed by it? Frankly, none That is why very few people sing it or care to hear it Human soul is essentially musical Though it may be surrounded by veils which need to be lifted, we cannot deceive the soul The unfortunate thing is that instead of looking upon such schemes as convenient scaffoldings we mistake them for life impulses and try to fit in music which has evolved through various aesthetic stages into the schemes Of course some part of our heritage may fit in But there is a large mass of our musical stock which could not be fitted into any scheme In such cases a common mistake committed is to change the shapes of these ragas so that they may be pigeon-holed in the scheme, or call these ragas by such names as 'bashanga' and so on, as if they are renegades and rebels The remark-

rarely hear the alapana of Nattakurinji, Yedukula Kambodhi, Useni, Devagandhari, but even beginners dabble in ragas like Charukesi, Sarasangi, Vagadeeswari, Jothiswaroopini and so on Further comment is unnecessary By long usage or otherwise the first set of ragas mentioned above have acquired an unique grandeur, a characteristic charm and an individuality all their own They do not depend upon mere schemes or swaras It is the graceful deviations from the actual swara points that make the charm and grandeur and sweetness and delicacy of those ragas The second set of ragas on the other hand are only swara jargon, and so it is easier to handle them and produce some noise No one with any musical sense will dare to do this with the other bhava-ragas

Let me not be mistaken as being against the advent of any new ragas, simple or involved As I have mentioned already life impulse is never static, it ever seeks newer and newer avenues of expression Among the 72 meals formulated as a possibility by Venkatamakhi, there are of course some which do not lend themselves to be elaborated as ragas But there may be some which may reveal some unique hidden beauty not recognised so far I am very much in favour of research in this direction to explore the possibility of giving life and form to some scales which now remain only as scales and have not been evolved into ragas For example, *Subhapantuvarali* was only a scale so far Even Sri Tyagaraja, who perhaps handled more melaragas than any other celebrity, is believed to have composed only one or two kritis in this raga (Even this is doubted by several) Still this mela is capable of being developed as a raga with its own characteristic bhava This is sung as a major raga (under the name *Todi*) in North India, and it is a musical feast to hear it expounded by a good North Indian Ustad Once some friends and I happened to hear it elaborated by Pandit Omkarnath Takhur and we went into ecstatic

raptures. One can never exhaust possibilities of musical expression; as long as life is dynamic there will be room for newer modes of such expression and new melody moulds will be found to express new impulses of life We should welcome all such expressions as enriching our cultural heritage. But no mechanical scheme or intellectual formula can be expected to do this, because this line of expansion is ultra rational, super-intellectual and above mechanical formulation

The place given in modern concerts to swara singing is inexcusable from the aesthetic standpoint. Swara singing is of later growth. In the ancient concerts, I believe, they mostly dealt with raga alapana and what must have corresponded to our modern Pallavi. There were not many Kritis then It is with the advent of Sri Tyagaraja that Kritis in such large numbers came to be added to the musical repertory of a Vidwan On account of their innate charm, scintillating brilliance and irresistible appeal these Kritis came to be an integral part of our concerts. But raga alapana and pallavi continued to retain their important place in concerts.

Neraval and swara singing were always integral part of Pallavi in which the sahitya was a small phrase and played only an insignificant part. But of late, neraval and swara singing have come to be almost an indispensable appendage for almost every kriti The propriety of such an intrusion may well be challenged. There is a definite place set apart for those special features which will bring out the mastery of the artist; why then indulge in it in and out of season? And especially with beginners it seems to have become almost an obsession. The veriest tyros who cannot handle properly even some of the well-known ragas start indulging in swara singing, jumbling up swaras into premeditated tala groupings. The other day the Hon'ble Justice T L. Venkatarama Ayyar presiding over a lecture

on music by myself made a statement which for a moment startled me, but when I thought over it I found it was profoundly true. He said that with the coming in of swara singing the raga began to decline How true! The swara singing seems to have become a trick to justify one's wasting time If one cannot keep an audience interested by giving soulful and appealing music he takes refuge under swara jumbling Let me again quote Mr K V Ramachandran, "Look at the other mediocrity of that facile verbiage—swara singing—the process of bundling swaras according to set formulae! What is the aesthetic or spiritual value of a mechanical mix-up of rhythm and design? It was Wilde who said that the incompetent could always be correct Is the rich sonorous material meant to deliver some pompous trifle? And have we nothing better to express through music's celestial medium than the banalities of an outworn technique?"

Even granting that swara singing and neraval have some aesthetic purpose to serve in some cases, should one indulge in it *ad nauseam*? Some discretion is certainly called for Certain ragas are best left without this swara drag This swara singing takes away the beauty of ragas like Nilambari, Punnagavarali, Kuranji Especially swara singing in higher tempo (second kala) has no place in some of these *vilambakala rakti* ragas

This leads one to consider the appropriateness of *chittaswara* in compositions One can understand that when a composition in a rare involved raga is made, a group of swara sancharas (chittaswara) bringing out the special characteristics of the raga tagged on to the piece may be tolerated Or when a madhyamakala sahitya forms a part of any composition the singing of the swara counterpart of this portion may in some cases be permitted But a chittaswara for all kinds of compositions needs to be justified The pity

is that in several of the compositions used in our concerts the Anupallavi and the Pallavi together make a continuous idea, and to introduce a chittaswara at the end of the Anupallavi before going back to the Pallavi in such cases is inexcusable Take for example, the well-known kriti "yendudaginado" in Todi raga, the sentence is not complete at the end of the anupallavi Only taken together anupallavi and pallavi make sense. What then is the justification for allowing a chittaswara to butt in between and cut the idea? There are several other pieces of a similar nature where chittaswara is indulged in.

Then a word about singing 'tana' "Raga, tana, pallavi" has *come to be a very common phrase. In the olden times* our music seems to have evolved mainly on the basis of veena. The earliest experiments in fixing the swaras in a scale have been made on the veena. Veena seems to have been also an accompaniment for vocal music. The pattern of music was therefore veena-coloured. While vilambakala was the natural feature of the veena madhyamakala played on it came to be called 'tana' It is an undisputed fact that veena is essentially suited for tana and the effect of tana on veena is something marvellous Historically it is quite possible that singers began to imitate on their voice this madhyamakala display on the veena That was, perhaps, the beginning of *tana* singing in vocal music. But what is the artistic propriety of doing tana on a flute or a clarinet or a nagaswaram or even on the violin? On the violin the rhythmic stressing of the bow has a pleasant effect and this may be taken to correspond to tana But how does a tana come out on the flute or the nagaswaram? I do not stress the point further Personally the aesthetic soul in me feels that *tana* must be restricted entirely to the veena. Because our ears have become in a way accustomed to tana on human voice we do not feel the aesthetic misfit And as I said at the beginning, our mind gets also used to the idea

of vocal tana I know some friends of mine who are deeply sensitive to music and who like very much our music concerts speaking violently against this tana business One friend went even so far as to say that vocal tana looked some sort of parody or mimicry He evidently represents a type of listener and we can't ignore that type

And now to that inevitable curse of the modern age, the mike. Evidently it has come to stay But it has come also to kill all the fine, delicate, subtle, almost spiritual nuances of our music Let those who want bold strokes and loud sounds have it by all means But let there be also provision for people who are inclined to hear our music as it is and as it is intended to be, without any distortion through a mechanised gadget Our music is said to be essentially chamber music While arguments may be adduced in favour of the mike for big halls and thousands of listeners, there is no altering the fact that real Carnatic music should be heard only in its appropriate setting The use of the mike in several cases helps to drown the noise made by the audience themselves I have in my younger days attended music performances where a thousand people have sat and listened and enjoyed for 4 or 5 hours without any mike If the people who come to listen to music make up their minds to provide the necessary silence to enable the singer to be heard all through the hall, there wouldn't be any need for a mike, but the present-day music hall crowd is almost a noisy mob and the poor musician, alas! has to be pitied He seeks the aid of a mike to be heard above the din and bustle in the hall The worst effect of this mike will be that our ear will gradually lose its sensitiveness, its power to understand and appreciate delicacy and subtlety And what is left of our music if we take away from it the charm, the delicacy, the fineness and the finish so characteristic of it? The success of a music performance depends as much on the listener as on the performer It is

the responsive audience that draws out the best in the performer Unless there is a kind of sympathetic understanding between the singer and the listener we cannot expect the performance to serve its high purpose. Music needs a suitable atmosphere and those who believe in the Divine quality and the spiritual purpose of our music should provide the necessary atmosphere in a concert hall so that the art may serve its purpose.

7 Aesthetic Sublimation in Music

The function of true art is to interpret for us the Divine through His manifestations An artist, if he be true to his calling, should in every piece of his work, painting, poetry, sculpture, architecture, music, etc, give us some idea of God-head behind the manifested Universe. He interprets for us God in a way slightly different from that of religion (so called), philosophy, science and so on.

A human being responds to the outer world in a number of ways The objective world first touches his physical nature. There are also the emotional and mental reactions Behind these, there is another deeper nature in him which also can be stimulated and made to respond to outer impacts, provided the impacts are of the proper kind The mere physical contact gives us a sense of comfort or discomfort. The emotional and mental reactions are pleasant or unpleasant. But the response from the still higher aspect of the human nature enables us to rise to a condition of sublimated aesthetic awareness where dualities seem to fade away altogether

All this is certainly true of music. Through the medium of sound touching our physical tympanum, our emotional, intellectual and spiritual aspects are affected There is first the physical reaction and certain combinations of sounds produce merely physical reaction and stop there. For example the regular beating of a drum or the rhythmic repetition of some sound as in a lullaby, produces a feeling

of physical ease and lulls the child to sleep The rhythmic sound of an engine in a train or a steam-boat, the rhythmic sound of the waves breaking on the shore, nay even the the electric fan, is able to produce a soothing physical quiet. But good music does not stop there It touches our emotions and affects them for good or for bad Also high class technical music has in addition an intellectual appeal In the case of one trained for the purpose, it is possible to respond to music purely on the emotional or intellectual level without much regard to the physical response But true music really goes far deeper than those and touches our very soul and leaves its imprint upon us Once we have had such an experience, we can never forget it. It may not be possible to explain and describe this reaction in ordinary language. It can only be felt This is one of those mystic experiences which baffle analytical expression

Of course, for music to be good, the producing voice should be musical By 'musical' I do not mean merely sweet I mean that it should be capable of those modulations which, piercing the physical, emotional and mental veils of the human nature, will be able to produce a tangible effect on the innermost soul We know by experience that there are several singers who have very pleasing voice, but whose music touches only the outer-most fringes of our nature Most of the theatrical singers come under this category Personally, I have not much patience with that music It is pleasing to hear them and I can stand them at the most for an hour or so After that it becomes dry, monotonous, life-less and does not evoke any response On the contrary, there are other musicians whose voices may not be quite so "pleasing," but who are able to command the attention of a discerning audience for hours and hours I do not hold a brief for bad voice I am decidedly of opinion that a pleasing voice goes a very long way to accentuate the effect of music, but it is not by itself music It may be within

the experience of most of us that in the case of a real mu
cian, even in spite of the handicap of a rugged voice,
are able to enjoy and appreciate the music. We forget t
mere voice after some time and open our hearts to
music which goes deep down into us and produces
aesthetic experience in which the mere physical aspect
almost lost sight of.

I grant that a certain amount of training may be nec
sary in the initial stages to be able to rise even at t
outset above the mere physical aspect and respond in
purely aesthetic way to expert music. But I a
decidedly of opinion that this training is within the rea
of every one. I only want to sound a note of warni
against the tendency on the one hand on the part of son
of the lovers and promoters of the musical art to set to
much value upon the purely physical pleasure-giving a
pect of music, and on the other, to neglect the emotion
appeal of music and make it a dry vocal gymnastic fea
One has only to listen to the music of Papanasam Siva
to be able to appreciate fully what I have said above.

The aesthetic sublimation I have referred to, in whic
the dualities coalesce, must be within the experience of a
those who have been moved to tears by a piece of a
(drama or music) We speak of tears of joy, but tear is
physical expression of grief, the joy which we experienc
in tear is not merely the physical or emotional joy. It i
Ananda which is above the pair of opposites, pleasure an
pain, joy and grief There are certain delicate aspects c
music which excite our emotion, often even giving rise t
choking, quickening of our heart-beat and so on. But behin
these outer expressions of grief, there is a mystic jo
(Ananda) in which both joy and grief exist in an idealise
synthetic form It is at revealing this Ananda which ca
be reached both by sublimated grief and sublimated jo
that every true art must aim. This is really the spiritua
aspect of art, to enable us to rise above the pair of opposite

as we see them down here and sense the oneness behind, in which these dualities and multiplicities coalesce It is on account of the recognition of this function of music (and in fact of all fine arts) that in India Religion and Art have always gone hand in hand, temples have been seats of exquisite productions of art and have patronised various artists And the artist of yore realised this spiritual mission and dedicated himself to the service of temples, that is to the service of God As long as we remain true to this ideal and let no spurious or false ideal to insidiously work for the degeneration of this art of arts, our efforts to promote the cause of, and work for the advancement of, the musical art, will be crowned with success

8 Stories and Anecdotes concerning Indian Music and Musicians

The history of Indian Music is brimming with stories and anecdotes Why, the very origin of music and other fine arts is in itself a story The Creator, Brahma, made this universes He created a variety of wonderfully beautiful and enchanting things, He created the majestic mountain ranges, the thundering water-falls and the giant forest trees, as also the nimble deer, the colourful peacock and the exquisite flowers He filled His creation with beauty, charm and splendour But He was sad! His Consort *Saraswati* found Him in that mood and asked Him the reason for it

Brahma said, "It is true I have created all this wonder and charm and showered beauty everywhere. But what is the use? My children, the human souls, simply pass them by, they do not seem to be sensitive to all the beauty around All this seems to have been wasted on them, their creation seems to be purposeless!"

Saraswati took the hint and told Him, "Well, let me do my share in the great work You have created all this beauty and splendour, I shall create in our children the

power to respond to, appreciate and get uplifted by them. I shall give them music and other arts which will draw out of them the capacity which lies deep in them to respond to the majestic splendour and exquisite charm and wondrous beauty of all creation."

So saying, the great Muse gave us the fine arts, in the hope that through the love of music and other fine arts man would understand something of the Divine in His manifestation. A funny story? Yes, but it has a great moral

One of the basic truths on which all Indian art is developed is that true art is never made to order, it comes as a result of an irresistible inner urge We hear a song of Tyagaraja and are enthralled, we see a majestic temple tower and gaze on it with wonder; we see some of our ancient sculptures and feel thrilled. Why? Behind all such works of art is a great spiritual urge. The artists who gave them poured their devotion in the shape of such exquisite works of art; it was an act of self-effacing dedication

A story is told of Tansen, the great bard of Akbar's court, which illustrates this point vividly Tansen was a great musician and Akbar was very fond of his music. One day when Tansen was in particularly good form Akbar was all in ecstasy and asked Tansen, "What is the secret of this sweet concord of notes which takes me as if it were out of this world and transports me to Divine regions? I have not heard anyone else do it. You are unique and unrivalled Is there anyone else who can thus cast a spell of magic and make a slave of our hearts? You are really wonderful, Tansen."

The great bard replied, "Sire, I am only a humble pupil of my master, Swami Hari Das, I have not mastered even a fraction of the master's technique and grace and

charm What am I beside him whose music is a rhythmic flow of Divine harmony, beauty and charm in sound ? "

"What !" the emperor cried, "is there one who could sing better than you ? Is your master such a great expert ?"

"I am but a pigmy by my master's side," said Tansen

Akbar was greatly intrigued, he wanted to hear Hari Das, but, emperor though he be, he could not get Hari Das to his court. So he and Tansen went to the Himalayas where in his own ashrama dwelt the swami Tansen had already warned Akbar that the swami would not sing except at his own leisure Several days they stayed at the ashrama, yet the swami did not sing Then one day Tansen sang one of the songs taught by the swami and deliberately introduced a false note. It had almost an electric effect on the saint, his aesthetic nature received a rude shock He turned to Tansen and rebuked him, saying, "What has happened to you, Tansen, that you, a pupil of mine, should commit such a gross blunder ?"

He then started singing the piece correctly, the mood came to him and, as it were, enveloped him, and he forgot himself in the music which filled the earth and heaven. Akbar and Tansen forgot themselves in the sheer melody and charm of the music

It was a unique experience When the music stopped Akbar turned to Tansen and said, "You say you learnt music from this saint and yet you seem to have missed the living charm of it all Yours seems to be but chaff beside this soul-stirring music "

"T's true, Sire," said Tansen, "it is only true that my music is wooden and lifeless by the side of the living harmony and melody of the master But then there is this difference, I sing to the emperor's bidding, but my master sings to no man's bidding but only when the prompting

influence of soul-stirring music. I had gone with a party to Kumbakonam for a marriage there. I was then very young—under ten In the place where we were staying I heard some one saying that there was to be a flute performance by a great expert in the next street that evening I wandered to the next street and found a large crowd gathered in a huge pandal to listen to the flute played by a strikingly handsome (but blind) person I went, I heard and I stayed for how long I do not know My people who had planned to leave the place that evening found me missing when they were about to start, and so they started searching for me Anyway it was late for them to get the train and so they postponed the journey One search party came to the place where I was and they also stayed and listened to the flute I had no idea of ragas then, but I understood from what others were saying that the raga the artist was so exquisitely elaborating was *Natakurinji* It produced such a deep impression on me that when later on I began to sing ragas, it was not *Todi* or *Bhairavi* or *Sankarabharanam*, but *Natakurinji* that I first started elaborating Similarly on another occasion the raga *Yadukulakambhoji* played on the nagaswaram by Sivakolundu produced an indelible impression on me

In those spacious days when vidwans were patronised by rulers and zamindars and had not to play to the tune of anyone who came in with a four anna ticket, the vidwans enjoyed great liberty, they sang as they liked without having to keep to a programme which provided only twenty minutes for *ragalapana, tana* and *pallavi* all together Some of them used to sing a raga for hours, and for even days without any repetition, they were capable of such originality and creative expression Some specialised in some ragas so much so that they came to have the names of some ragas attached to their own names, such as Todi Sitaramiah,

Begada Subramania Iyer, Kedaragowla Narasimha Iyengar, and so on

An interesting story has been told of Todi Sitaramiah who was a court musician at Tanjore. He was a great favourite of the Raja, his rendering the raga *Todi* was considered to be unrivalled Sitaramiah was a spendthrift and in spite of all the favour showered on him by the Raja he was always in want. Once he was badly in need of money He had pledged all his belongings for various debts incurred by him and so he could not again approach his creditors for money

There was a money-lender at Tanjore who was somewhat of a Shylock, and so people went to him only as the last resource. Sitaramiah had to go to him for a loan. The money-lender offered to give the loan on some suitable security Sitaramiah pleaded that he had already pledged all his properties and that there was nothing left over to pledge as security The shrewd money-lender had a brainwave He said, "Surely that cannot be You must be having still something with you which you can pledge. Yes, I know you have something which you can offer as pledge. If you are prepared to pledge it, I shall let you have the loan at the usual rate of interest."

Sitaramiah was surprised, but his need was so great that he said to the money-lender, "Well, as far as I am aware, I have nothing of my own to pledge If you mention something which is really my own, I am prepared to leave it with you as security for the loan"

The money-lender's eyes twinkled and he said, "Your *Todi* raga is still yours, you may pledge it and take the loan, and when you return the loan you can have it back."

Sitaramiah was non-plussed, but he had no choice and so he pledged his *Todi* and got the loan From that day he could not sing his favourite raga Days passed and the

Raja began to miss the *Todi* raga very much, he wondered why Sitaramiah did not sing *Todi* at all, it was a great surprise'

When he came to the court one day the Raja asked Sitaramiah to sing *Todi* for which he was hungering Sitaramiah was in a fix, he was gulping in his throat and wringing his hands On the Raja's demanding an explanation the truth came out The Raja appreciated the shrewdness of the money-lender, cleared the loan taken by Sitaramiah and redeemed his favourite *Todi* raga.

Certain ragas are considered appropriate to certain hours of the day, for example, *Bhupalam* in the early morning, *Saveri* and *Dhanyasi* in the early forenoon, *Poorvakallyani* in the evening, *Kamboji* and *Nilambari* at night are considered suitable

Pachampetta Nataraja Iyer was a great patron of music in Trichy District. Whenever musicians passed that way they used to stay with him for a while and spend some musically fruitful time in his company Once the famous Maha Vaidvanatha Iyer happened to stay for a night with Nataraja Iyer After supper Maha Vidyanatha Iyer, as was usual on such occasions, started singing Nataraja Iyer wanted him to sing the raga *Bhupala*, which ought to be sung only in the early morning hours and not in the first half of the night. For a moment Vaidyanatha Iyer hesitated, and then said, "Certainly, I shall sing a shloka as ragamalika and include *Bhupala* also in the string of ragas"

He then started singing the shloka and kept the listeners spell-bound so that they lost count of time Then he sang *Bhupala* raga also It was so exquisitely rendered that it looked as if the dawn had come at midnight As a matter of fact it was just dawn then People were in such rapt attention that they did not know that many hours had passed and the next day was dawning

The vidwan got wild he shouted. "Which fool would care about the sahitya of a pallavi?" and went away from the palace.

The Zamorin also got angry The Private Secretary was a tactful man, he pacified the two and arranged for a recital the next day he had managed to get the Zamorin to agree to waive his stipulation regarding the wording of the pallavi The vidwan started the pallavi and elaborated it with such mastery and skill and charm that the Zamorin was highly pleased and made extra presents to the vidwan

When, however, the artist was about to leave the palace, the Zamorin asked him to give the wording of the pallavi at least then The vidwan faced the Zamorin and said, "I am prepared to give you the sahitya on condition that you will not get angry"

The Zamorin agreed to the condition, and the vidwan gave him the sahitya, and immediately ran away The Zamorin was taken aback and got into a rage, but he could not do anything as the vidwan had in the meantime run away The sahitya was *Samoodiri thavidu thinnu* meaning that the Zamorin ate the chaff, the implication being that instead of enjoying the pure art of music, the Zamorin was after the words which especially in a pallavi was as insignificant as the chaff as compared to the grain

9 Folk Music

Folk music of a nation is a natural expression of the mass soul of the people making the nation In fact any national art is or at any rate ought to be a true expression of the cultural soul of the nation And music being the highest of the fine arts is the best and most vital expression of the nation's soul While the higher and more elaborate musical expressions correspond to the higher and more intellectual section of the people, folk music expresses effectively and in simple, direct and straight-forward

Lavani and Chindu, with its varieties like Vazhinadachinthu, Nondichinthu, Kavadichinthu, etc. Of these the Kavadichinthu (so called on account of its association with the carrying of Kavadi by the devotees on their shoulders) has attained a high degree of importance among the folk songs for various reasons It has an intrinsic musical charm of its own, it depicts the universal longing of the human soul for union with the object of its devotion, the Nayaka-Nayaki bhava, bhakti which is the background of all devotional literature—the deity in this case being Lord Subrahmania, the most popular Deity in Tamil Nad (Tradition has it that it was Lord Subrahmania who gave us the *muttamil*, Iyal, Isai and Nataka (literature, music and dance-drama)

Annamalai Reddiar—blessed be his memory—the famous author of Kavadichindu, has laid Tamil Nad under a deep debt of obligation by his great gift of the Kavadichindu which is classical in its theme, diction and rendering There is no Tamilian heart which does not throb in response to his chindus

There are also other varieties of folk-songs which convey moral lessons and expound philosophical truths, teach proverbs and narrate historical events, and so on

Kerala is remarkably rich in the variety of folk songs, Malayalam boat song—Vanchipattu as it is called—is a speciality of the land

One striking fact which emerges from a study of the folk-songs is that, while the tunes may not conform to the rules of Lakshana, they are not lacking in aesthetic quality, on the other hand it would look as if their very charm and appeal are the result of this apparent disregard of the requirements of technique

10. Modern Trends in the Classical
of South India

Till about a few decades ago, music and
were patronised chiefly by Maharajas and Zam
the rich Those were spacious days and the mu
without a care and devoted all his attention to m
But that patronage has now shifted from the 1
many, from the palace to the man in the street T
musician of today cannot depend any more on the
of the aristocracy He has to look for his supp
people at large and he has to keep them in goo
The result is obvious The professional musician
a series of compromises to make a good living

In those olden days there was practically
or Association which supported the professional
but now practically all the professionals have
upon the goodwill of these Sabhas and their of
Sabhas themselves have to cater to the demand
of their numerous members It is true that mu
spread far and wide, but what has been gained
has been unfortunately lost in depth Inertia, p
well as mental, is an inborn instinct in all cr
take things easily, to do things superficially and
ment without any effort is the order of the day
stand and appreciate good music, the ears ha
trained at least to some extent But the average
is satisfied with what is superficial, with what ji
the tympanum of his ears, and therefore he exp
the professional musician only just what he wants
this, he becomes even impatient when some ras
are connoisseurs of the art, want to listen to
high class music from these musicians As nat
number of those people is large as compared with
ber of rasikas their words prevail and only those

who satisfy their whims are much in demand If a Sabha has to run and make both ends meet, it has to satisfy the members on the one hand and make sure of a decent gate collection for the performance on the other In short, the Sabhas are forced to become money-making concerns, though the money is intended to go to encourage and patronise good artists! The position of the professional musicians in such circumstances is not enviable indeed

It is true that we are living in an age of democracy, the average man feels entitled to the amenities of life which were enjoyed till recently by just a few The Society has a duty to provide this for him It does not follow from this that the man in the street is to dictate to a professional musician as to what music he should give or what not. There are certain matters which cannot be decided on votes Whether the solution of an intricate problem in electrical engineering is correct cannot be decided by votes The opinion of a million who know nothing about the subject will certainly count as nothing against the opinion of one who knows The average man may demand for a chance to hear music, but he cannot obviously dictate how a particular raga is to be sung The question whether a particular Swarasanchara is admissible in a Raga cannot be decided by the average man or voted upon by a mixed assembly In such matters expert opinion alone counts Here I am reminded of the wise words of Sir Henry Wood who said, "Music is no place for a democracy Let us have a few dictators' Unfortunately the modern tendency is to level *down* instead of levelling *up* The musicians as well as the Music Sabhas have a duty to provide good music to the listeners and not merely to give the music they want. It is their duty to raise gradually the level of appreciation and create right taste for music As matters stand at present, it will be a difficult task, but all good work is apparently difficult to start with Everywhere there is a cry for

improving our musical standards as they have fallen low in recent years It is time we do something to lift the general tone of our performances and also improve the taste of the average listener

One of the outstanding characteristics of the modern age is hurry, rush, craze for excitement. Those days when people lived quietly and did things leisurely are gone. Everywhere people want speed at any cost. This is noticeable even in the field of music I have heard performances in my younger days which used to last for five to six hours. I know of a great musician who would do only two or three kritis in two hours and spend two to two and a half hours in ragalapana and pallavi They were musicians who sang their best and they were not dictated to by the listeners. A musician then was free to sing what he liked and according to his mood Nowadays it has become a rare thing to hear any of the majestic classical pieces in slow tempo like

"Najeevadhara" in Bilahari,

"Koniyadinapai" in Kamboji,

"SriRajagopala" in Saveri,

"Cheraravademi" in Ritigowla,

"Marimarininnemoralida" in Kamboji.

People want to hear quick-moving songs The tragedy is that even those songs which require to be sung in slow tempo for aesthetic effect are hurried through in our modern concerts

Ragalapana has almost become a formality The Raga-Tana-Pallavi item in the A.I.R is, to my mind, almost a farce I have found that in some of the modern classical concerts the time devoted to Raga-Tana-Pallavi is less than half an hour! I wonder why there should be that item at all Is it a ritual or a formality which has to be gone through? If it is done at all let it be done properly Why

should they not have two types of concerts, one intended for the average listener who is not much interested in Pallavi and elaborate Raga Alapana and consisting of only quick-moving pieces, and the other where elaborate Ragalapana and systematic Pallavi singing are prominent? This is a point which requires serious consideration

Of late there is a tendency to lay greater stress on the manipulation side of music than on the aesthetic side The primary appeal of music as of any art is to the emotion To make music mechanical is tantamount to killing it That is why we lay great emphasis on *Bhava* in music Music without *Bhava* is no music at all It is generally found that young students of music attempting to sing a Raga produce more a jumble of swaras, than the Ragas as such A Raga though based upon swaras and grouping of swaras is something very much more than these, the swaras are the form but the life of the Raga is its Bhava To bring out the bhava of a Raga requires skill and an inner sensitiveness Master singers can do this successfully with all the Ragas they handle Certain ragas stand out for their particular beauty and that beauty depends upon not the swaras but something behind and beyond the swaras The young student unequal to this task resorts to singing ragas with very poor aesthetic appeal such as Charukesi, Sarasangi, Jotiswarupini, Dharmavati, and indulge in mere swara jugglery Though we have a large number of ragas, it is not all of them that lend themselves to elaboration We hear of 2400 ragas, 5184 ragas and even 34776 ragas but most of these are "Ghost" ragas, to use the phrase of late Mr K V Ramachandran Such ragas are only jumbles of swaras and have no aesthetic reality about them

Let me quote Mr K. V Ramachandran "Like ghosts, we may seem to see them or fancy they exist, but they have no real entity Of late, there has been a mass emigration of ghost ragas into Carnatic music Ever since the intrusion

of pseudo-ragas without musical life or light our musicians have lost the faculty of singing or playing the real ragas . with the lapse of the art of grand alapa they have lost the musical architecture" In many of our present-day concerts we rarely hear the alapana of Nattakurinji, Yedukula Kambodi, Useni, Devagandhari, but even beginners dabble in ragas like Charukesi, Sarasangi, Vagadeswari, Jotiswaroopini and so on Further comment is unnecessary By long usage or otherwise, the first set of ragas mentioned above have acquired a unique grandeur, a characteristic charm and an individuality, all their own. They do not depend upon mere schemes or swaras It is the graceful deviations from the actual swara points that make the charm and grandeur and sweetness and delicacy of those ragas The second set of ragas on the other hand are only swara jargon, and so it is easier to handle them and produce some noise. No one with any musical sense will dare to do this with the other bhavaragas

Let me not be mistaken as being against the advent of any new ragas, simple or involved Art impulse is never static, it ever seeks newer and newer avenues of expression Among the 72 melas formulated as a possibility by Venkatamakhi, there are of course some which do not lend themselves to be elaborated as ragas But there may be some which may reveal some unique beauty not recognised so far I am very much in favour of research in this direction to explore the possibility of giving life and form to some scales which now remain only as *scales* and have not been evolved into *ragas* For example, Subhapantuvarali was only a scale so far Even Sri Thyagaraja, who perhaps handled more melaragas than any other celebrity, is believed to have composed only one or two kritis in this raga (Even this is doubted by several.) Still this mela is capable of being developed as a raga with its own characteristic bhava This is sung as a major raga (under the name

Todi) in North India, and it is a musical feast to hear it expounded by a good North Indian ustad One can never exhaust possibilities of musical expression, as long as life is dynamic there will be room for newer modes of such expressions and new melody moulds will be found to express new impulses of life We should welcome all such expressions as enriching our cultural heritage But no mechanical scheme or intellectual formula can be expected to do this, because all art expression is ultra rational, super-intellectual and above mechanical formulation

Another thing noticeable nowadays is the undue importance given to swara singing Singing swaras was always an integral part of Pallavi in which the Sahitya was generally a small phrase and played only an insignificant part But of late, neraval and swara singing have come to be an indispensable appendage for almost every kriti The propriety of such an intrusion may well be challenged There is a definite place set apart for those special features which will bring out the mastery of the artist why then indulge in it in and out of season? And especially with beginners it seems to have become almost an obsession The veriest tyros who cannot handle properly even some of the well known ragas start indulging in swara singing, jumbling up swaras into premeditated tala groupings The swara singing seems to have become a trick to justify wasting time If one cannot keep an audience interested by giving soulful and appealing music he takes refuge under swara jumbling Let me again quote Mr K V Ramachandran 'Look at the other mediocrity of that facile verbiage swara singing the process of bundling swaras according to set formulae' What is the aesthetic or spiritual value of a mechanical mix-up of rhythm and design? It was Wilde who said that the incompetent could always be correct Is the rich sonorous material meant to deliver some pompous trifle? And have we nothing better to express through music's

celestial medium than the banalities of an outworn technique?"

When art, which ought to be a vital impulse vibrant with life and scintillating with upwelling emotion, descends to formalism and conformity with rigid intellectual patterns and formulae, its death knell is sounded One of the deplorable trends noticeable nowadays *is the tendency to make music rigid and formal by laying too much emphasis on* the so called "theory" and thereby stifling the life side of the art

We should not forget the vital basis of our musical art Art in India has always been considered a sacred function, music and devotion went always hand in hand Good, soulful and ennobling music was generally inspired by devotion I need not labour this point especially in India. Music is something Divine and the Masters of old showed great reverence towards Art. It was believed that Divinity was present where there was good music brimming with bhava and devotion We may recall the old verse which says that God dwells not in Vaikunta, nor in the hearts of yogis nor *in the sun, but where there is music sung by devotees* This aspect unfortunately has receded to the background, if not altogether disappeared, in recent times I would make a forcible appeal for restoring the proper atmosphere which was generally associated with the music of the ancient scholars and composers

What makes our music unique is the delicacy and subtlety which form the very soul of our music. Its charm and appeal depend on those delicate nuances, which form the back-bone of the art There is a tendency nowadays *to neglect this subtlety and go in for broad effects* Take for example group singing, in which may be included the so called "orchestra"—orchestra in India can only mean Vadya Vrinda, that is group instrumental music. Simple pieces set

in tunes which do not involve delicacies or subtleties may be sung in group and may not lose much thereby Our bhajans are examples of such group singing In such con certs simple devotional pieces are sung by a number of people at the same time But to sing highly classical and technical pieces in group is to stifle the very subtlety and fineness which go to make our classical music It is at times felt that even accompaniments like violin and mridanga are a drag and take away much from the beauty of the music Just imagine how the following compositions would fare if sung in chorus —

"Yelu Annapoorne' in Punnagavarali,
'Neeledavaraga' in Nilambari
'Ramabana" in Saveri
'Yendudaki" in Todi,
"Adaya Sri' in Ahiri

Then a word about the mike It seems to have come to stay, but can the mike ever fit into the atmosphere of our music which is essentially "chamber music"? The very idea of amplifying those evanescent and pleasing soft sounds which adorn our music seems obnoxious Generally the mike distorts the voice and instruments In some places it converts music into shrieks and howls The tragedy is that ears accustomed to such shrieks and howls become incapable of responding to anything soft and subtle I know peo ple would say that in these days performances are attended by thousands and we have to go in for loud speakers I can only say that in the olden days musicians had sung in the open courtyards of temples and they were heard by thousands When the musician wants to be heard and the listener wants to hear, they will always come to a proper adjustment Now the listener wants to hear only the arti ficial sound coming out of the mike and his ear has got accustomed to a certain degree of loudness below which

his ear cannot respond and the musician wants to make the listener hear him somehow Especially if with little effort his voice could be heard very loudly by the listeners the musician is tempted to take the easier path On account of this mike it is very rare to find silence in our concert halls These halls have become social clubs where people meet and make conversation, and the listener has got accustomed to listen to music above all this sound. The whole thing is working in a vicious circle If I am really anxious to hear, I shall certainly carefully attend and if every one is attentive, there would be perfect silence, and people can hear music even without a mike, also the musician will not take advantage of the mike and sing in very low pitch or any false voice Doing away with this mike will in my opinion make a great improvement in the general tone of our classical musical concerts, in the amount of earnestness which a musician puts in and the degree of attention on the part of the audience

Another insidious mischief done by the mike is the tendency on the part of the singer to lower his tonic note, *Adhara Shruti*. I can understand this in the case of musicians who are handicapped by their voice. Why should one whose voice can reach higher pitches lower his tonic and sing in ranges which are lower than what his voice would naturally warrant? Because a certain great musician who developed throat trouble lowered his tonic to enable him to give performances, it became the fashion for several others to do the same thing, though there was no reason at all for this lowering in their case. Also singing in a lower pitch means less effort and in any case there is the mike to amplify everything Why then unnecessary exertion? Why not take the easier way? This is the line of argument which prevails As we know, each voice has its own natural tonic This should be so chosen that the voice could normally cover the regions from Panchama in the Manda

rasthayi to Panchama in the Tarasthayi (this makes a total interval of two octaves) When singers lower their normal tonic the result sometimes is that their voice does not function properly in the lower levels and there is marked lack of Shrutilayam (blending with Shruti) in those levels.

In my own young days there was practically no singer whose Adharashruti was below what is now generally called the 4th Kattai (the fourth key of an ordinary hormonium—this will correspond to note 'C') Nowadays a musician who can sing to a shruti of even the second key is a rare phenomenon Some of our top ranking singers have lowered their tonic to even one full major tone below the first key, i e, nearly E in the lower octave

The effect of this on the accompanying instruments is deplorable. How can a violin or a mridangam tuned to such a low pitch give its best? Their total value is lost and their contribution to the richness of the concert is meagre Of course the accompanists try to make up for this loss by intellectual display involving intricate manipulation But this is not art

As with our culture, our music also is individualistic in its basic structure, it is based upon the human voice Even instrumental music when played solo follows the pattern of vocal music. That is why our compositions are confined to the range of the human voice and rarely go beyond two octaves It is possible to do 3½ octaves on the Veena, but no piece goes beyond about 2 octaves All this because the human voice is the primary basis for our music In a musical concert the main artist dominates the whole show and the other participants are only *accompanists* They merely follow the main artist Even when they are given occasions to play solo they have to be within the limits determined by what the principal artist sings or plays Generally in a South Indian musical concert (Vocal music) the accompani-

ments consist only of a violin and a mridangam Occasionally (and of late more frequently) other tala instruments like Kinjira, Ghatam, Dolak, Moorsing, etc, are introduced (I do not see why so many tala accompaniments should be introduced in a classical vocal concert They may be good in their own way and perhaps they will fit in with a tala vadya programme) In an ordinary vocal musical concert it is best to keep to only one tala instrument, mridanga and a violin When the tala instrument alone is given a chance, all these other tala instruments may join, but at other times it is best they remain quiet

Before closing I should like to mention a tendency which I have noticed of late on the part of some to tamper with the tunes of some of the old songs of settled pattern I can understand in the case of good sahityas of old which have come to light recently for which the tune is not known, a competent person setting them to appropriate ragas and talas But this has to be attempted only by a really competent person and not by all and sundry This has happened in the case of many of the sahityas of Swathi Thirunal Maharaja for which tunes were not available, the late Gayaka Sikhamani Muthia Bagavatar set appropriate tunes for them He was a vaggeyakara, competent to undertake this work To meddle with an old song of recognised tune and set it to a new tune is not proper Even if the new tune appears to be better, one has no right to set the old sahitya of another to what he considers to be a better tune. If that new tune is good, he can get a new sahitya fitted into it, nowadays we have any number of sahitya kartas who will gladly do it Especially if the new tune is not an improvement upon the old one, this change-over is an inexcusable act of vandalism I am putting it rather strongly because this has happened in recent years I will just give one typical example There is an old Tamil song *"Tandai tayirundal"* in Mukhari raga, Chapu tala, which had been

current for over sixty years I have heard it sung in my childhood and I learnt it myself It was also published in some books in the above raga and tala This song is a kind of *Nindasthuti* (praising God in the garb of censure) and the tune fits in with the sentiment exceedingly well Recently this song has been changed by some one to another raga and another tala, the most unfortunate thing is that it has been reproduced on the gramophone in this new form! Anyone who has any sense of propriety or aesthetic sensibility will be able to say that the new tune does not fit the song at all It looks almost a parody I have been wondering why people should indulge in such misguided undertakings There are other cases also perhaps not so bad The song "*Sivalokanathanai*" which occurs in Gopalakrishna Bharati's "*Nandanar Charitram*" had been set by him in Senchurutti raga and I have heard it sung also in that raga In recent years the raga has been changed to Nadanamakriya and this new raga has found a place even in a syllabus published by a University There seems to be no justification for this transformation Again the song "*Ramanai Tharuvai*" in Arunachala Kavi's *Ramanataka*" had been set by him in Mohana raga, but recently it has become a fashion with some to sing it in Sindhu Bhairavi raga Another example of rather striking interest, the song "*Aaro ivar yaro*" in the same opera *Ramanataka*, which expresses Sri Rama's surprise at seeing Sita in King Janaka's palace and his inquisitiveness to know who she was, had been set by the composer in Saveri raga It used to be sung in that raga and the raga and tune suit the occasion very well Well, that tune has been recechtly altered and the piece is now sung in Bhairavi raga I do not see what need arose for this change! I admit that the Bhairavi tune is excellent in itself Why should the sahitya of Arunachala Kavi be smuggled into this tune? Could not a suitable new sahitya be found for this nice tune in Bhairavi? I hold

that the Saveri tune fits in with the sentimental a
situation better than the Bhairavi tune, excellent
is in itself To my mind this change is unwarranted
give many more examples The point is however o
The song of the composer is his own art creatio
particular form To change tunes, especially whe
pieces have been current, is not justifiable, parti
when the new set up is not in any case an improv
A better aesthetic sense on the part of rasikas as
the musicians will, I feel sure, put a stop to such u
able acts of intrusion and usurpation

11 Dance Music of the South

In our ancient books *Sangita* (Music) has been
as comprising song, instrumental music and dance In
words Sangita was a combination or synthesis of mu
dance For a long time these two went together a
ponent parts of the same art. Of these two it is c
that dance should have been the earlier art. A
generally is only a generalised expression of our r
to certain phenomena of life. Any emotional exciten
life is generally accompanied by movements in the
form which ensouls that life These outer expressions
inner emotional experience are first seen in bodily
ments Expression through vocal articulation mus
obviously come in later A fawn, a kid, a child first
ses its joy or grief by movements in the body In
there is some kind of a relationship between an in
perience and the outer expression of that experience.
a study of such relationships certain general pr
emerge and these have been set forth in the works o
writers like Bharata and Nandikeswara

When later on music developed as an art by it
served two functions On the one hand it developed
pendently as pure art music and on the other it serv

needs of the Dance art which also was developing on its own lines independently There was, however, this difference that while music can find expression for itself independently of dance, the art of dance needed music as an integral part of its function

As music developed as an independent art it developed along lines some of which had no bearing on dance at all Of course it also continued to subserve the needs of dance

Dance has two primary aspects, generally called *Tandava* and *Lasya* In the former, movements and rhythmic patterns—some of them intricate and subtle—dominate Laya or tala aspect of music is stressed here In *Lasya*, however, emotional expression (bhava, as it is called) is the dominant note It is, therefore, obvious that music used for the dance art should be chosen so as to serve the particular needs of the dance item for which it is used

In the first place it is a mistake to think that any music can be used for dance or that any song or composition can be danced Generally musical compositions now used in dance are pieces specially composed for purposes of dance For the Tandava aspect of dance we have pieces like *jatiswara*, *tillana* and some special types of *varna* For *Lasya* where *bhava* is important we have padas, javalis, some varnas, and verses *specially* suitable for *abhinaya* Though there is no hard and fast rule as to the nature of the theme chosen for *abhinaya* it has been almost an unbroken tradition to choose *sringara* (erotic) pieces for this purpose There are valid reasons for this All art is Divine in Indian Culture dance, music, painting, etc, are all sacred vocations Art and religion have always gone hand in hand in this country The ultimate object of all art is to lead the human soul to achieve union with the Divine This seeking for the Divine by the human soul is *bhakti*, devotion which is only one aspect of Love In describing the various forms of this devotion it has been said that the

most effective form is *nayaka-nayaki bhava*, the human soul surrendering itself as the beloved (*nayaki*) of the One Lover (*nayaka*) of the Universe I need not stress this point fur ther Viewed from this stand-point even the apparently ero tic songs will reveal a high purpose

Also pieces composed for *abhinaya* are made with this particular purpose definitely in view The song should con tain mostly words or ideas which lend themselves to the gesture language of dance It is found that in general "erotic" themes meet this need very well I do not mean that other emotions cannot be roused or that pieces can not be composed on other themes But it happens that in our lyric literature the most suitable themes are in *sringara rasa* and they are available in plenty I have seen a few other themes also danced and with effect. Pieces like 'Innamum Orutharam" of Gopalakrishna Bharati, though obviously not erotic, are eminently suitable for dancing But such pieces are rare It has also to be borne in mind that all erotic songs may not be "danceable"—if I may coin a word to express what I have in my mind For a piece of music to be 'danceable', especially in *lasya* style, certain minimum requisites are essential The raga, the tala and the tempo should be in keeping with the *rasa* intended to be conveyed by the song Also the sahitya should consist of words whose meanings can be adequately expressed in ges ture language with the help of the eyes, hands, bodily move ments and mudras Of late, it has become the fashion to dance compositions of Saint Tyagaraja like "Ra Ra Seeta ramanee manohara" and other compositions like "Varuka lamo" in *Nandan Charitram*, and "Tiruvadi Saranam" Frank ly these are found to be flat and wooden, for the simple rea son that they are not and were not intended to be "dance able" The best pieces provided by our lyric literature for this purpose are the *padas*, some of the *javalis*, *padavarnas*,

songs and verses from Jayadeva's *Gita Govindam* verses from *Krishna Karnamritam* and so on

The general programme for a Bharatanatyam recital consists of

(1) Alarippu
(2) Jathiswaram
(3) Sabda
(4) Varna
(5) Some padas and javalis
(6) Tillana
(7) Some verses in Sanskrit.

Item (1) is only some sort of dedication to the art of dance Item (5) deals mostly with the *lasya* aspect where emotions and expressions are predominant, this is the most appealing part of the programme as also item (7) In *varna* both *abhinaya* and rhythm are combined In the other items we may say that the *tandava* aspect is stressed and rhythm (*Laya*, *tala* and *kalapramana*) plays the important part.

It has not been sufficiently recognised that *tala* (rhythm) has much to do with evoking human emotions Laya has its own world of bhava like Raga It is a matter of common experience that some suitable change in the tempo in which a piece is rendered often changes the emotional response in us This accounts for compositions being set in varying tempos Generally *padas* and *padavarnas* are meant to be sung in slow tempo and javalis in slightly higher tempo In rendering musical pieces for dance this aspect of *layabhava* has to be kept in view so as to produce maximum effect.

In general the types of music intended for a concert and for a dance recital are not the same and should *not* be the same Pieces meant for dance should be carefully

chosen having in view their structure, their tempo, their sahitya and the suitability of the music in which they are set It is an aesthetic blunder to think that any song can be danced Only "danceable" songs should be chosen for dance recitals

12 Hidden Potentialities of Music

In India from time immemorial extraordinary powers have been claimed for music. Several stories of miracles worked by music have been handed down to us by tradition. Whether these stories are authentic or not, it cannot be denied that such a belief has persistently existed.

For one thing music has always been considered Divine in origin Great rishis and devas have been associated with music The authorship of some standard treatises on music, dance, aesthetics and so on, has been attributed to great rishis In ancient Samskrit literature there are descriptions of music concerts in which Great Ones like Brahma, Indira, Prahlada, Narada, the Great Kumaras have taken part and the sage Shuka acted as interpreter of the performance. Music is intimately connected with Divinity

As I have said above, abnormal powers have been ascribed to music It is said that Muthuswami Dikshitar brought rain by singing the raga *Amritavarshani* I have actually seen rains being brought about by chanting the *Varunajapa*. The raga *Megharanjani* also is considered capable of bringing about cloud-formation in the sky and subsequently rain. *Nagavarali* subdues snakes We hear of snake-charmers, especially in the village parts I have heard from authentic sources that the late Nagaswaram Vidvan Sivakozhundu could draw out cobras from their holes and make them swing their hoods rhythmically in tune with the music of his nagaswaram

We have the following traditional story about the raga *Deepak* Gopal Naick was an expert musician in the court

often produce results in aspects of a man's nature not so obviously related to the outer senses Man is not merely a bundle of organs and senses The physical part is the least important part of his existence. He has an emotional and intellectual life, a moral life, a superintellectual or intuitional life and a spiritual life of his own Though these are far too subtle to be clearly envisaged by the ordinary man, any thinking individual will be able to see the important part played by these aspects of human nature in the life of the individual

Musical expression, as any art expression, is fundamental in human beings and its appeal is universal All art is in essence an expression of the inner being in man, and music, the queen of the arts, is especially so It is fundamentally related to the aesthetic and super-intellectual aspects of life. Just as spoken words express our inner thoughts however inadequately, music expresses some of the indefinable, subtle experiences of human nature in a way that it alone can do The mode of achievement of this may be vague and may escape our analysis, but then in the very nature of things it ought to escape such analysis Edward Carpenter speaking of the emotional appeal of all arts says—"Sometimes people ask what is the meaning of such and such a work? Meaning be hanged" It is this, at times unexpressible, subtle, vague, elusive appeal that is essentially characteristic of all Indian Art, and especially of music

We have heard of the oft-quoted verse in Samskrit

Pasurvetti Sisurvetti Vetti Ganarasam Phanee

In one sense this is literally true A beast, a child on the side of innocence and a serpent on the side of the aggressive are responsive to music properly chosen If a lullaby is not able to lull a child to sleep, one may feel certain that there is something wrong with the melody If a good flute player or Nagaswaram player is not able to

intellectual function—into a work of art, they are missing the basic function of art By first rousing the emotion and then sublimating it music lifts one into supra-intellectual regions—intuitional and spiritual

As expressing human emotions, there is no other aspect of art or philosophy which can excel music. Human emo tions, while they can in general be grouped under several heads, are beyond clear-cut definition We can only deal with certain broad divergences Some of these emotions are very difficult to express either by words or by action, but such emotions can be expressed by music I have myself felt that emotions like *shanti*, *self-surrender* and so on are best expressed either in music or not expressed at all. While we may not agree with the classification of our current ragas according to their emotional appeal, it is beyond doubt that certain ragas definitely evoke some typical emotions

Music has its own language, the language of emotions, and as human emotions are universal emotions such as joy, fear, depression, despair are universal and so the appeal of music which uses such emotions as its language must be universal

The one vital difference between expressing human thoughts in spoken words and expressing human emotions through music is the fact that while spoken words may unconsciously or deliberately mislead and give erroneous impressions, the musical expression of the inner emotion can never mislead, because it is not in general based on any conventional combination of words as in the case of speech, and hence understanding human nature through its musical expression will lead to a truer and better understanding than perhaps through the camouflage of spoken words

We know that the soul-culture of a nation (or an individual) finds the best and truest expression in music and

And so the healthy development of our children's character is to a very large extent accelerated and helped by instruction in music The ancient Greeks realised this so well that they planned their whole politics in such a way that music and art played a very important part in every kind of national activity The moral effects attributed to music and dancing were "regarded as of such importance as to influence profoundly the whole constitution of the State" That is the power of music, one can in a musical atmosphere play upon the emotions of our school children as a musician plays on the string of a Veena or a Sitar We can make apparently dull and irresponsive pupils wonderfully alert and responsive provided we create the necessary musical atmosphere It is no exaggeration to say that there is no saying to what extent we can mould and develop the character of school children if only we give a very prominent place to music in our educational institutions

We are now teaching ever so many things to our pupils in the schools, some of course useful, but some of doubtful utility We must see that music is given the place it deserves in our institutions I would even go to the extent of saying that, if it comes to that, we could omit some of the subjects we are teaching at present and put in music in their place. Our pupils will be all the better for it.

There are a number of ways in which we can introduce music in our schools and utilise its influence to bring about an improved state of things The school work may begin and end with music Instruction begun in the harmonious atmosphere produced by music is bound to be more impressive than otherwise. As many opportunities as possible may be found to introduce music and singing in class work And above all, music may be taught, I may say must be taught, to the pupils as one of the subjects of instruction. At the hands of the educationalists and the authorities con-

sharp thrills this style may appear to be dragging and monotonous, but it has its own charm and there is an atmosphere about it which gives it its distinctiveness

Swathi Tirunal Maharaja was truly a great man, great in many ways He was a poet, a great devotee, a statesman, a musician and a scholar of repute His reign though short was crowded with remarkable achievements, many of the institutions which are now our pride were started or inspired by this master mind Though he lived but for 34 years and reigned for 18, it has been a full and rich life He was master of 13 languages and composed songs in five of them His personality and fame attracted very eminent musicians to the State Among the musicians who adorned his court were Vidwan Koil Thampuran of Kilimanoor, Iravi Varman Tampi Kshirabdi Sastrigal, the famous Vadivelu and his brothers, Parameswara Bhagavatar (of Palghat), Cunniah (a disciple of Thyagaraja) and Meruswami Of these Vadivelu Meruswami and Parameswara Bhagavatar greatly influenced his compositions The Royal composer has himself said that for his compositions he took as model those of Margadarsi Sesha Aiyengar of Srirangam who lived in the 17th century and composed mostly in Sanskrit, (he used the word *Kosala* for his Mudra) The range of his compositions is vast and as referred to above, he composed in Sanskrit, Malayalam Canarese, Hindi and Telugu His compositions comprise Tana Varnas, Chowka Varnas, Padas, Kritis, Tillanas Upakhyanas and so on The following list gives the approximate numbers —

Tana Varnas	2
Chowka Varnas (one in Telugu, one in Manipravalam and seventeen in Sanskrit)	19
Padas (The famous 'Pannagendra Sayana' is one of the padas)	65
Navaratri Kirtanas	9
Nava Raga Malikas	9

those of the notes corresponding to those letters Though generally the words of the sahityas dominated the melody there are compositions like "Kalyaye Sree" in which the words merely hang on the melody like beads in a string He has composed special slokas and kirtanas to be sung during the nine days of the Navaratri particular pieces being ear-marked for particular days In addition to these lyrical compositions, he composed three *Upakhyanas* In these he was greatly influenced by Kokila Kantha Meruswami, (so-called on account of the sweetness of his voice) Meruswami settled in Travancore in 1833 and lived upto 1870 He introduced here the *sankeertana* style As a result of this the Royal Composer has given us three upakhyanas, *Kuchelopakhyanam*, *Utsavaprabandham* and *Ajamilopakhyanam* They contain, in addition to slokas, 33 kirtanas

Among the varnas, the one in *Kapi* beginning with Suma Sayaka" is well known and at the same time technically of a high order It is understood that Vadivelu influenced to a very large extent the music of it

Among the ragas used for his compositions occur some rare varieties His composition "Dhanyoyam" in *Gopika Vasantam* has already attracted considerable notice *Dwija vanti* is another raga in which there are very few compositions by others *Lalitapanchamam*, *Desakshi*, *Sudda Bhairavi*, *Ghanta*, *Poorva Kambhoji*, *Mohana Kalyani*, *Navarasam* are some of the rare ragas in which he has composed songs He has left behind him a legacy of musical treasure of which every Travancorean may be justly proud

Over and above these compositions which had been published already several new compositions have been brought to light from manuscripts since discovered There are several still unpublished which it is hoped will be made available soon When these also come out and gain currency music lovers will realise what a rich and wonderful and

exquisite heritage has been left for us by the Royal Musician Among the new pieces which are gaining currency several have already made their mark Pieces like "Mamavasada' in Kanada, "Pahijagajjanani" in Vachaspati, "Rama Rama" in Simhendramadhyamam, "Viharamanasa" in Kapi, "Kripa yapalaya" in Charukesi, "Sri Ramachandra" in Huseni, have won a unique place for themselves in the world of music.

It is a pity that his compositions did not become cur rent, perhaps there were reasons for it Most of his com positions being in Sanskrit could not probably catch the ears and imaginations of the people as easily as Tamil or Malayalam or Telugu .It is also possible that it struck a new distinctive electric note in the ears of the people domi nated by the *Sopana* style and hence the general public found his compoisitions rather difficult to grasp There was another important reason also It is well-known that com-positions of great musicians find currency mostly through their disciples But, naturally in the case of Swati Tirunal there could be no *sishyaparampara*, be being a royal com-poser

Thanks to the great interest which Their Highnesses the Maharaja and Maharani take in the cause of music, steps have been taken to popularise this musical treasure A Summer School of Music for teaching these Kirtanas to the music teachers in the State was organised some years ago This has now become a permanent institution providing for a four years' course in Carnatic Music It is hoped that this institution will serve to bring out the greatness of Swathi Tirunal's music, attract people to appreciate his great-ness and realise what a priceless treasure has been given to us by the Royal Composer

The famous Govinda Marar was also a contemporary of Sri Swathi Tirunal Maharaja, but he seems to have gone out of Travancore seeking newer and wider fields There is evidence to indicate that he was seen here in Travancore

by Parameswara Bhagavatar about the year 1831 On account of his capacity to sing musical pieces in six kalas (which means 32 times the original speed) he was called *Shatkala* Govinda During his peregrinations he met the famous Thyagaraja in Tanjore District. He travelled wide and went to such distant places as Pandharpur and Benares Subba Rao, who was Dewan to His Highness Swati Tirunal, was also a musician who could play Swarabat and Mridangam. Swati Tirunal is said to have learnt Swarabat from him

The next period of musical importance was the reign of Ayilliam Tirunal Maharaja (1860-1880) Sri Ayilliam Tirunal was himself an accomplished singer Musical experts of the day used to stand in great awe of His Highness Most of the well-known figures in the musical world came to pay their respects to His Highness and get recognition from him The famous Kalyana Krishna Bhagavatar the veteran Parameswara Bhagavatar and his disciple, Coimbatore Raghava Aiyer (so called because he lived for a long time in Coimbatore though he was born in Vadasseri near Nagercoil) were the chief among those who adorned Ayilliam Tirunal's Court There was practically no day on which there was not some kind of a musical concert at the Palace in which most of the musicians took part. very often His Highness himself used to take part in the performances to the wonder of those present The famous Maha Vaidyanatha Aiyer came to his court twice It was only on his second visit that he appears to have got recognition from His Highness's hands. Mahadeva Aiyer, a great violinist, also adorned the Royal Court at the time Kalyanakrishna Bhagavatar and Mahadeva Aiyer lived on to the succeeding reign

There has been an unbroken line of musicians attached to the Royal Court in Travancore and they had kept some

should be born about the same time so that a new and vibrant impulse may be given to the music of South India

Among the trinity (as generally Thyagaraja, Syama Sastri and Dikshitar are called), Thyagaraja is unique, for variety, richness and prolific compositions he is unrivalled It is not my purpose here to compare him with the other two of the trinity, I propose to refer to Thyagaraja and Sri Swati Tirunal There is considerable similarity between these two composers Both were intensely devoted to their family Deities Sri Rama was no abstract God-head to Thyagaraja to him He was a living friend, guide and philosopher in intimate contact with him, encouraging him and admonishing when necessary The compositions of Thyagaraja are but the reactions of this relationship existing between him and Sri Rama Similarly to Swati Tirunal Lord Padmanabha was an intimate Reality The royal composer lived, breathed, sang and did everything but to please Sri Padmanabha To serve the Lord was his goal He was verily a Padmanabha Dasa The cares and anxieties, worries and troubles of a reigning king sat lightly on his shoulders, because he discharged his duties as a servant of the Lord, in His name and for Him Though he was a king he was in his heart of hearts a true ascetic, a real Vairagi Both were proof against the temptations of earthly splendour and riches

There are also some points of contrast between them which may also be referred to here Thyagaraja composed in homely tongue which can be understood by general people while the compositions of Sri Swati Tirunal are mostly in sonorous Sanskrit with its majestic flow Also in the compositions of Sri Swati Tirunal there is a touch of the impersonal as utter self surrender to the Deity overshadowed every other expression of his devotion In the case of Thyagaraja his personality is revealed in a mass of detail in his compositions. The various expressions of human

emotion exhilaration, ecstasy, dejection, despair and various other phases of devotion abound in Thyagaraja's compositions His intimate emotional reactions are revealed in many of his compositions

Thyagaraja had the good fortune to have a sishya parampara which carried on the traditions set by the master and this parampara is mainly responsible for the great popularity and wide circulation of his compositions In the case of Sri Swati Tirunal, as he was a ruler, such a parampara was naturally impossible This is one of the reasons why his compositions could not get that currency which one would have expected and which would also have been achieved had he not been a ruler Thyagaraja lived a life of poverty He shunned wealth even when offered The only wealth he valued was the wealth of the devotion to Sri Rama Sri Swati Tirunal on the other hand was a ruler but in his heart of hearts he was detached and no earthly temptation had a place in his life

It is really the good fortune of us here in Southern India that these two great saints who were also Divine bards were born To them the musical world owes a great deal and every lover of music feels grateful to them

16 Sri Tyagaraja the Mystic

All Paths to the attainment of the Supereme ultimately fall into two heads, which may be described as the Kramamukti marga and the Sadyomukti marga, in other words the Normal Path and the Special Path These two may be compared to the well-made, smooth, slowly climbing cart able road going up a hill to the top and to a short-cut, the bridal path, to reach the same top On the former, people live a life of ordinary goodness following the normal rules of conduct and gradually work themselves towards the stage when they get illumination, while on the other path one hopes to achieve in a very short time what nor-

mally would take perhaps many aeons to accomplish on the other path This is really the path of Yoga

Even on this path there are two methods depending upon the temperament of the seeker for Reality, persons evolving on these two divisions may in a way be described as 'Occultists' and 'Mystics' or roughly *Jnanis* and *Bhaktas* The occultist, so to say, has his face turned outwards He studies the universe and equips himself to understand the basic truths beyond the phenomenon The world to him is an expression of a Thought in the Mind of the Great Lord and he seeks to get at that Cosmic Mind by a study of its objective expression The mystic on the other hand seeks the Reality within himself, more by feeling than by any analytical process Herein lies the fundamental difference between the occultists and the mystics Intellect and detachment play a greater part in the outlook of the occultists, while Love and emotional reactions form the basis of the mystic's efforts Almost all the bhaktas in the real sense of the word are mystics

There are essential differences between the mystic and the occultist in their outlook, their method and their reactions As I have already mentioned the outlook of the occultist is more objective in the broader sense of the word while to the mystic his inner reactions and feelings count everything, reasoning by the mental faculty has only a secondary place in the life of the mystic What the occultist achieves by his reason, the mystic will do by intuition which, in some cases lifts him to a stage far beyond what the occultist can hope for The occultist is more impersonal in all his activities than the mystic who is intensely personal While the former is dealing with abstract concepts the mystic finds his joy in dealing with concrete manifestations of those concepts Naturally this tends to make the occultist apparently steady and balanced while the mystic allows

himself to be swayed by impulses and feelings To the mystic God is not an abstract idea or a metaphysical concept, He is a Great person full of Love and Mercy The mystic perceives Him as a friend, as a lover, as a beloved, as a guide, as a father, as a mother, in short he approaches God in all these relations, and when his feelings sway him he goes into ecstasies and forgets himself, in such moments he and his Beloved God alone exist in this universe God is realised as the Great Lover of all that lives This naturally leads to various reactions, and so in the writings or other expressions of mystics we find various moods portrayed Sometimes he takes liberties with his God and finds fault with Him and even rebukes Him At other times he is so full of joy that nothing else matters to him except to bathe all the time in that ocean of Ananda At other times he considers himself as being unworthy of the Lord's attention Because the mystic's emotional nature is always active, there is a tendency in him to be emotionally unstable he may be irritable, he may appear a fanatic, he may even evince unbalanced sex life These are only passing phases in the life of mystics

In the case of Sri Thyagaraja a study of his compositions will clearly indicate that he was a mystic to the core He lived but to please Sri Rama who was living Reality to him a constant companion and a loving Guru The glamour of earthly riches had no influence upon him His one great sorrow was that people about him were not able to enjoy the bliss of Ramabhakthi, and were making themselves and others miserable He often felt sorry for his uncongenial surroundings The piece "Toline Jesina pooja phalamu" in *Suddha bhangala* is an example of this phase of the Saint's feeling A true mystic that he was, he has had visions of Rama in various aspects and also several experiences with the Lord, and some of these are often referred to in his compositions

" Alakalalladaga " in *Madhyamavati*
" Koluvamaregada " in *Todi*
" Yentabhagyamu " in *Saranga*
" Natimatamarachitivo " in *Devapriya*
" Chinnanade-na " in *Kalanidhi*
" Parithapamu " in *Manohari*
" Dasarathi " in *Todi*

As examples of his vision of Sri Rama as the supreme embodiment of all that is Good and Beautiful, as one to whom the heart flows out in love and rhapsody we may consider the following compositions —

" Merusamana " in *Mayamalavagoula*
" Yentukoukalintura " in *Suddhadesi*
" Lavanya Rama " in *Poornashadjam*
" Ramabhirama " in *Durbar*
" Ninuvina namade ndu " in *Navarasakannada*
" Sanitodi teve in *Harikambhoji*

That he had also moments of great exhilaration is evident from the compositions like " Yetla terigituva" in *Vasanta*

When for a moment he lost touch with his Rama due perhaps to some emotional reaction he blames himself for it, in a mood of self-condemnation The pieces

' Yetulabrotuvo ' in *Chakravakam*
' Pahi Kalyana ' in *Punnagavarali*
' Kaligiyunte " in *Keeravani*

are examples thereof

As a bhakta he often takes liberty to rebuke Sri Rama for His neglect The following pieces are illustrative of this reaction

Parivasakama "	in	*Vanaspati*
Entavedukondu	in	*Saraswatimanohari*
Sarivarilona '	in	*Bhinnashadjam*
Neeke telivaka '	in	*Anandabhairavi*
Anyayamu Seyakura "	in	*Kapi*
Chalamelara "	in	*Margahindolam*

In short, Thyagaraja was a typical mystic and with this background his life and his compositions reveal a great meaning and a high purpose. Apparent contradictions get reconciled and inexplicable incidents get explained, and we see the saint as an embodiment of emotional synthesis which leads to an Emotional Vision of the Great Reality

17 Syama Sastri the Oldest of the Musical Trinity

Syama Sastri, the oldest of the famous musical trinity of South India, was born at Tiruvarur (Panchanadikshetra, where the other two of the trinity also were born) in the year 1763, about four years earlier than Sri Thyagaraja He belonged to the Tamil-speaking Vadama community of the Northern sect. His ancestors lived originally in Kurnool district and later on came to and settled in Kanchipuram Tradition has it that Brahma the Creator Himself installed the Deity Kamakshi at Kanchipuram and Adi Sankaracharya installed this family to be in hereditary charge of worship in the temple.

After the fall of Vijayanagar in 1565 evil days fell on the family, but they kept their trust to be in charge of the deity Bangaru Kamakshi (so called because the idol was of gold) and left Kanchi for the south, they wandered for years through forests and strange places till finally they came to Udayarpalayam where they found temporary safety and stayed there for about seventy years Internal dissensions, however, necessitated their leaving the place they

moved further down, touching a few places on the way, till they came to Tiruvarur where they stayed for more than forty years It was here that Syama Sastri was born He was given the name Venkatasubramania as he was born in Krittiga Nakshatra His pet name was, however, 'Shyama Krishna" by which name he has been so well known In his early years he had sound instruction in Telugu and Sanskrit he learnt the fundamentals of music from an uncle of his who was not by any means a great musician It is rather remarkable that none of the ancestors of Syama Sastri, paternal as well as maternal, were musicians It was his *vasana*, inborn instinct, brought over evidently from previous births, that made him a great musician composer

In his eighteenth year his family migrated to Tanjore consequent on the fear of invasion from Hyder Ali and sought the aid of the then Raja of Tanjore to ensure the safety of the idol of Kamakshi Ultimately a temple was built for Kamakshi and lands were endowed for it as sarva-maniyam On the occasion of the installation ceremony the king also gave large free-hold estates to Syama Sastri's father Thus Syama Sastri was above want.

As in the case of the other two of the trinity Syama Sastri also had, as it were, his initiation into the science and art of music at the hands of a great yogi, Sangita Swami who seems to have taught him among other things the secrets of the science of laya After his tutelage under Sangita Swami he was directed by the Swami to go to Pachemiriyam Adiappayya, the author of the immortal Varna Viriboni in Bhairavi raga [This one composition is, in my view, enough to canonise him and build a temple for his worship] Syama Sastri made rapid progress under Adiappayya and all his rare, inborn faculties flowered and developed into fullness so much so that Adiappayya himself came to

regard "Kamakshi"—the pet name given to Syama Sastri by Adiappayya—as a divinely gifted genius

In appearance he was striking and majestic His com manding personality impressed everyone who came into contact with him His diamond ear-rings, the gold mounted *rudraksham* on his neck, the bright-coloured shawl he usually wore and the striking kumkum mark on his forehead added to his impressive personality

He was a great devotee like his compeers Thyagaraja and Dikshitar His *Ishta devata* was Sri Kamakshi who was a living Presence and who even occasionally spoke to him It is said that it was Syama Sastri who initiated Muthuswami Dikshitar into "Sri Vidya Upasana" As we know, Dikshitar was twelve years younger than Syama Sastri

Syama Sastri's contribution to Karnatic music is unique. He had great mastery over the technique of the art, he commanded polished diction His compositions are replete with ragabhava He had given special charm and beauty to the raga *Anandabhairavi* and enriched it to a remarkable degree. Even his swarajathis are brimming with ragabhava, the swarajathis *Kamakshi anudinamu* in Bhairavi and *Kamakshini* in Yadukula-Kambhoji are scintillating master-pieces He has illustrated how jathis in a tala can enhance the beauty of a piece e g, *Sankari Samkuru* in Saveri, *Ninnu Vinaga* in Purvakalyani and *Himachala tanaya* in Ananda-bhairavi [The last piece which ought to be sung in Aditala Misrajati is nowadays sung in simple Aditala, thereby tak-ing away all the majesty and beauty of the composition] He gave special prominence to Misra Chapu tala (or Triputa) and composed comparatively the largest number of songs in it. I once chose samples of the compositions of each of the trinity and worked out the proportion of songs in the more prominent talas (The results are given in the chart above.) The percentage of Syama Sastri's compositions in Triputa (or Misra) preponderates

of the sahityams but in the musical form or mould of his *kritis* also One striking characteristic of the personal element is that it colours, limits, at times even distorts the form of expression employed by the person The moods of the personality influence the art expression The same raga handled in different moods expresses itself in any one mood only partially, the extent of this incompleteness, this limitation depending on the person's reactions to these varying moods I do not propose to go into details, a study of Thyagaraja's kritis will bear out this point In the case of Dikshitar there is no trace of this incompleteness or deficiency or limitation or partial manifestation, the musical mould he adopts is complete, is all inclusive, is almost transcendental This can be seen in every one of his pieces The beginning phrases of the kritis are enough to reveal the raga in its entirety, its fulness, its essence, its uniqueness, its ramifications and its possibilities are all there This faultless completeness is seen in the structure of the sahityam also and in the general framework which takes in the raga, sahitya and tala and makes a complete, virile, vibrant musical edifice "Balagopala" in *Bhairavi*, "Sri Subrahmanyaya Namaste" in *Kambhoji*, "Akshayalinga vibho" in *Sankarabharanam*, "Sri Rajagopala" in *Saveri* are eternal monuments which will last through manvantaras and kalpas, because they are like great Archetypes in the Cosmic mind If I were a fanatic, I should say that any phrase which is not used somewhere in "Sri Subrahmanyaya" cannot properly bring out the bhava of Kambhoji So also in regard to the other kritis referred to

One might ask, "How is it that the personality is so suppressed, had Dikshitar no human feelings, had he no psychic experiences, no emotional ecstasies and depressions?' Dikshitar was certainly human, intensely human Did he not make effort to bring joy to his wife who was crazy about ornaments? Did he not feel grief when he heard of his

that the bracelet of the image of Sri Vittala in the temple was missing and it came out that Purandaradasa had given it to the dancer Inspite of his entreaties Purandaradasa was dragged to the temple, tied to the post and flogged At that moment a Voice was heard from the Inner Shrine saying that it was the Lord who disguised as Purandaradasa went to the dancer, because the dasa had some little karma to work out and by that apparent disgrace and flogging Purandaradasa had been completely cleared of all old karma and became a free soul, a *mukta* The Lord also indicated his desire that that pillar should thereafter be considered a sanctified post and named *Dasarasthamba*

He lived a full and rich life. He lived but to serve God as His children, the masses He lived but to bring the Joy of God to the sorrowing world He was a Divine Mediator interpreting God and His Joy to humanity and lifting the suffering humanity to the Bliss of God, and this he did through the medium of music After his mission was over he returned to the feet of the Lord on Saturday, Pushyabaula Amavasa of the year Rakthakshi, corresponding to 1564.

20 Superstition in Music

Superstition is a seasoned sneak who can insidiously worm his wag into any field of human thought or activity There is practically no department of human life where he does not rear his ugly head And music is no exception. One of the basic causes which tend to perpetuate this sneak's exploits is mental inertia. As long as no urgent necessity arises to exercise the grey cells in my brain why not simply go along the line of least mental resistance, why not simply follow what X or Y or Z does irrespective of whether what he does is supported by reason or commonsense?

Superstition is generally defined as blind belief or action which has not the support of reason. Superstitious people

ed an utter confusion in the ideas of ragabhava and rasa Also his assumptions are not acceptable at all. I wonder if he forgot or did not know that the song usually sung or played on nagaswaram at the most auspicious moment in a marriage or consummation ceremony in a South Indian household is in *Saveri raga*! So alas the ragas Sourashtra and Surati do not hold exclusive monopoly for the final auspicious point, we have several standard kritis in these ragas which have no relation to any mangala or auspiciousness Because Shri Thyagaraja happened to compose one of the mangalams in Sourashtra this savant generalised that Sourashtra was an auspicious raga, and on a similar reasoning averred that Saveri was a sorrow-suggesting raga! What about the pieces "Ramabana" (Thyagaraja), "Sri Rajagopala" (Dikshitar), "Yentanerchina" (Pattanam Subramania Aiyar), "Yethanaisonnalum" (Padam)? They are all in Saveri, and evidentially they do not suggest or provoke the emotion of sorrow This is clearly a case of superstition in music. I can give many parallel cases *Mukhari* is generally called a "weeping" raga, simply because one or two compositions composed in it were suggestive of grief But there are several compositions in mukhari, like "Yentanine varnintunu", "Sangita shastra", "Yelavatara" which are all in *Mukhari* but bear no relation to sorrow or grief

Here is another striking example of superstition Till a few years ago it was usual to begin a classical concert with the piece "Vatapiganapatim" in raga Hamsadhwani by Dikshitar It had many advantages and set the right atmosphere at the beginning and was in praise of Ganapati, the remover of all obstacles. Hindus generally begin any important function with the worship of Ganesha After sometime I noticed that some performers began their concerts with the kritis "Raghunayaka", "Sri Raghukula", "Manasukaruga", all in Hamsadhwani I asked one of the musicians

why they did not begin with a piece on Sri Ganapati as per tradition. His answer simply floored me. He said that the intention was not to propitiate Ganapati but to begin with raga Hamsadhvani in which "Vatapiganapatim" was composed Can superstition go further? So "meditation" became a matter of a cat being tied to a cot.

Take again the case of the unfortunate raga *Ahiri* It is sincerely believed by some that if one sings it in the morning he will have to go without food the whole day This superstition developed almost on the lines of the cat story given above. A musician tied his foodpacket to the end of a bent bamboo and started singing *Ahiri* raga As the day got hot the bent bamboo straightened itself and the food packet went up high in the air and beyond possibility of being reached So the man missed his lunch From this solitary instance developed the superstition about *Ahiri* raga Poor Ahiri!

Instances can be multiplied. What has been given is however enough. An unfortunate thing about these superstitions is that they find their way into text books used in institutions and successive batches of students accept them as facts and this tends to perpetuate such absurdities. It is time something is done to prevent such perpetuation of superstitions.

There are many other types of what may not seem to be superstition but are really superstitions *incognito* Blind and unwarranted imitation of the mannerisms of the teacher by the disciple is probably based on the sub-conscious idea that these mannerisms make the merit of the teacher's music!

Lowering of the *adhara shruti* to an unwarranted extent is another type of what may be called para-superstition. A prominent musician had, on account of some physical trouble, to lower his *adhara shruti*, quite to a marked extent. And the modern witch, the mike, came agreeably to his rescue.

This led, I do not know why or how, to an implied idea that this lowering of the shruti was a privilege of top-rank artists. And so, one by one, the musicians started lowering their shrutis, even singers with gifted voices who can sing to 4-kattai shruti lowered their tonic note to 1-kattai or ½ kattai, and in some cases, as low as 6-kattai lower octave.

When we come to anecdotes about musicians there are a number of fertile brains which can manufacture all kinds of stories most effortlessly. Some of the anecdotes are certainly authentic, but there are many which can be traced to the imagination of some admirers. Mr. T. L. Venkatrama Aiyer, in a recent article, showed the utter impossibility of some of these stories being true. We must have heard the fantastic story explaining why Sri Thyagaraja did not compose pieces in Anandabhairavi — there is a view based on valid reasons that the solitary piece "Neka theliyaku" in Anandabhairavi, attributed to the saint, is not a composition of Thyagaraja. On the face of it the story does not ring true. There may be other reasons for his not handling *Anandabhairavi* or *Kuranji* or *Dwijavanti*, or even *Navroj*, except in a Divyanamakriti. Some people do not feel happy unless the lives of great people abound in fantastic occurrences, they mistakenly think that such stories (and miracles) add glamour to the lives of such great saints and sages. The truth is just the other way about. The greatness of Sri Thyagaraja stands rooted in his music and his unparalleled devotion to Sri Rama, he does not need any boosting up with stories and miracles.

Before closing I wish to refer to a very subtle, and hence dangerous, form of superstition. Some persons think that they are above any kind of superstition and so they look down upon anything which appears as superstition to them because they are not able to understand or find a rational basis for it. Such an attitude is in itself a form of

blind acceptance of their personal capacity to understand or explain, as the standard to judge whether a belief is superstition or not. Certain miraculous and hidden powers are attributed to music; some of these have been proved to be true. Psychological effects of music are profound. In recent years investigations have been carried on in the realm of musical therapy and they have revealed startling effects. Here are fields in which research may be carried on with beneficial results.

21. Karnatak Music—An Analysis

INTRODUCTORY

The beginnings of Indian music are lost in the mists of antiquity. There is evidence to show that this art had been developed to a very high degree of perfection even in very early times in the history of this country. All through historic and even pre-historic times music has been the cherished treasure of kings and noblemen of this land. Ancient cities were great centres of musical culture. All the famous musicians were attached to one court or another. Some of our rulers were not only connoisseurs but were great musicians themselves. Travancore, Tanjore and Mysore were, and even now to some extent are, great musical centres.

THEORY OF INDIAN MUSIC

As far as the theoretical basis is concerned, there is very little difference between the North Indian and South Indian systems. Certain forms, modes of rendering and names vary but the essential features are the same. As with every musical system there are seven fundamental notes in the scale. The original scale was developed from the *Sama* chant. This is entirely different from the western Major scale. This was the original Suddha scale and corresponds to the modern Kharaharapriya raga of Karnatak music, (the *Kafi* scale of North Indian system). Starting

with these seven notes as basis all the required intervals of the scale were developed For our practical purposes we use only twelve notes as in the west, but even these are slightly different from the corresponding notes of the western scale The system of equal intervals (the chromatic scale of the west) is foreign to Indian classical music The twelve notes with their names and the corresponding vibration-ratios are given below, along with the corresponding notes of the western scale —

Shadja	C	1 000	1 000	1 000
Shuddha Rishabha	Db	1 055	1 059	1 068
Chatushruti Rishabha or Shudha Gandhara	D	1 125	1 122	1 125
Chatushruti Rishabha or Sadharana Gandhara	Eb	1 172	1 189	1 200
Antara Gandhara	E	1 250	1 260	1 265
Shuddha Madhyama	F	1 333	1 333	1 333
Prati Madhyama	R	1 406	1 414	1 423
Panchama	G	1 500	1 498	1 500
Shuddha Dhaivata	Ab	1 562	1 587	1 601
Chatushruti Dhaivata or Shuddha Nishada	A	1 667	1 682	1 687
Shatshruti Dhaivata or Kaishiki Nishada	Bb	1 778	1 782	1 801
Kakali Nishada	B	1 875	1 888	1.898
Shadja (Higher)	C	2.000	2 000	2 000

Over and above these 12 notes our classical treatises speak of 22 intervals* in the scale These are not merely of theoretical interest but are actually used by experts in

(* See Note I)

called its *bhava* Bhava is the life of the raga, and a raga rendered without its appropriate bhava will be only a medley of sounds Directions have been given as to how best the bhava of a raga can be expressed, what particular phrases bring it out prominently, what combinations are to be avoided, which particular notes are to be elongated and which slurred over and so on These directions are based on actual experience and cannot be deviated from

It might look that such directions hamper a musician and interfere with his originality and improvisation In reality it is not so Side by side with all such rules, there is almost an unlimited scope for improvisation and display of originality on the part of the musician This is the unique character of Indian music Take for instance the raga *Sankarabharana* (which corresponds to the Western major scale) Its notes are given, its characteristic phrases are given in classical reference pieces called *Varnas* (Varna means the colour or charm peculiar to the raga), one dare not take liberties with these prescribed rules Yet, as we know, one can display all his originality, ingenuity and power of improvisation in elaborating that melody We have heard of some great musicians who could elaborate a melody-type for days without any repetition or deviation from prescribed rules Let me quote what Leopold Stokowski says on this matter —

> " One of the great characteristics of the music of India to my mind is its flexibility and freedom While giving due consideration to traditions stemming from the past, Indian music is free and improvised so that all powers of imagination in the musician are brought into play In this way the music of India is always creative, never a reproduction of what is written or played, as sometimes happens with the music of Western Countries "

A musician can reveal his innermost soul in his music, f... himself in it and experience a great peace and calm ... such moments he feels something from on high pouring ... and permeating him and he senses the bliss of c... activity

It must be mentioned here that these raga... themselves compositions, they are the bases on ... compositions are built. In one raga we may ... number of different compositions. The ragas them... be sung without any words at all and in some ca... can be sung for hours together

One of the most important features of India... the use of graces (*Gamakas*, as they are called) ... graces that give the life to Indian music. The... accidental to our system but essential All the sh... vals which were mentioned above are used in th... tion Round every note of the 12 intervals scale ar... some of these short intervals, and these are us... graces That is why it is so difficult to produce r... music in a harmonium or in any equal tempered in... About 10 gamakas are generally used though th... reason why an expert may not improvise more

Adi	—	I O O O I X I X
Triputa	—	I O O I X I X
Ata	—	I O O O O I O O O O I X I X
Jampa	—	I O O O O O O I I X
Rupaka	—	I O O O I X
Eka	—	I O O O

I represents a beat of one hand over the other
O represents counting with fingers
X represents the waving off of the hand that beats

All musical compositions other than those which are sung as *ragas* are set in particular *talas* There is almost no limit to the varieties of compositions in the some *raga* and in the same *tala* A very common feat performed by expert musicians to show their proficiency in *tala* is to sing the same piece in the same *tala* and so on

The word *Laya* used in connection with music has generally two meanings, one general and literal, and the other technical The obvious literal meaning is fusion or unison or coalescence. When the voice merges with the drone, we say that the singer has achieved *Laya* with the shruti When our mind is entirely absorbed in anything we say that it is in a state of *Laya* In this sense it is used in various contexts

I propose to deal in this article with the special aspect of "*Laya*" considered as *Rhythm* It is in this sense that we use the word laya as the basis of all talas Rhythm is the basis of all activities in nature From the movement of heavenly bodies in space to the gentle quiver of a blade of grass, all movement in nature is based on certain fundamental laws Philosophers will say that rhythm is the basis Divine manifestation and it is that basic rhythm which [illegible] in the Dance of Nataraja In any case we [illegible] the fact that rhythm has profound influence [illegible] Regular ticking of a clock at times

induces languor and drowsiness the regular sound produced by a moving train helps many to sleep Rhythmic swaying of a swing lulls a child to sleep It can be proved by mathematics that under certain conditions bridges can be broken and glasses shattered to pieces by the use of regulated movements or sounds The effect of rhythm on human nature is more profound and one can work wonders by a judicious use of rhythm. In music, the *Tala* aspect is as important as if not more important than, the *R* aspect. In fact, the evolution of music as an independent art was later; originally it was part of Dance. The old definition of sangita suggests that in the earliest stages dance, song and instruments went together The earliest treatise on music, Bharata's NATYASHASTRA, is a work on DANCE and only a few chapters are devoted to music proper And in DANCE the tala aspect dominates

other musical system in the world does tala (or time measure) assume such an important role or allow of such wide and intricate manipulation as in Karnatak music! Oh! what a variety of tala instruments have been in use and also associated with great saints and Devas! In some verses describing music we have references such as these Prahlada handles the cymbals, Uddhava plays the tala instrument called Kamsya, Indra, the king of devas, plays Mridangam, Brahma, the Creator, and Prahlada keep time with cymbals, great ones like Nandi, Bhringi play varieties of drums, and all these keep in tune with the great Cosmic Dance of Nataraja!

Now I come to an important aspect of tala (or laya) which does not at present receive the attention it deserves We speak of RAGABHAVA meaning thereby that which constitutes the essential aesthetic uniqueness of the Raga Ragabhava is entirely different from Rasa which is closely related to human emotions The Bhava of a Raga may cover a variety of Rasas But we know that a real Raga has its own Bhava So also a tala has its own Bhava, that is, its own characteristic aesthetic response. People often neglect this Tala-bhava Various types of talas have varying aesthetic effects Nay, changes of tempo in a tala may bring about a change in its bhava It is a matter of common experience that a medium tempo tala if used in very slow tempo, produces a remarkably different aesthetic reaction In North Indian music, they recognise this possibility even in ragas A particular set of swara phases which bring out the bhava of a raga, begins to reveal the bhava of another raga if sung in a slower tempo It is a well-known fact that elongation or contraction of a note in a raga may change its bhava altogether What does this mean? It means that time element has a great effect on the bhava of a musical phase This aspect of tala is fully exploited in our classical Dance Art This is generally referred to as *Kala-pramana* which

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set by the composer, singers introduce their own variations within the limits allowed by the compositions

(4) Then we have the *Padas* and the *Javalis* which are usually erotic compositions They are generally looked upon as the out-pouring of the human soul in ecstatic love towards the Divine.

(5) The *Tillana* is another variety This is a composition like *Javali* or *Kirtana*, but without words Certain combinations of sounds alone are used, such as *tadhim*, *nadridhim*, *tom* and so on

(6) *Varnas*, *Gitas*, *Alankaras*, *Swarajatis* and so on are technical compositions intended to train the voice and give a sound basis for musical knowledge

DRAVIDIAN SONGS

A very old system of music seems to have existed in the South even before the Aryanisation of South India. It has been slowly absorbed into the Aryan system *Tevaram*, *Tiruvachagam*, *Tiruppugazh*, and *Tiruvaimozhi* are the more serious of the Dravidian compositions, *Kavudichindus*, *Temmangus* and *Kummis* being the lighter ones

FOLK MUSIC

Folk music of a nation is a natural expression of the mass soul of the people making the nation In fact any national art is, or at any rate ought to be a true expression of the cultural soul of the nation And music being the highest of the fine arts is the best and most vital expression of the nation's soul While the higher and more elaborate musical expressions correspond to the higher and more intellectual section of the people, folk music expresses effectively and in simple, direct and straight-forward manner the emotional experience of the general population I have heard it said by people who have travelled wide that, while there is marked difference between the various kinds of musical techniques obtaining in different parts of the world, there

is a sort of similarity in folk music all over the world. This is but natural as the basic impulses of humanity are similar all the world over. It is only in the sophisticated conventional society that a lot of artificial differences become manifest.

In India, especially, where music has played an important part in the day-to-day life of the nation, folk music is inextricably woven into the life of the people. Indian people are essentially a musical people. They use music for almost every function in life, whether it is a religious ceremony or a social function or an agricultural pursuit they do not hesitate to use music to lighten their hearts and make their burden less heavy. They have a song for harvest, another for lifting water, and yet a third for loading a van and so on. In temples and on marriage occasions music is an indispensable factor. A train-motor collision occurs in the morning, by noon the incident is set to music and printed as a leaflet, and in the afternoon it is sold in the trains and buses. This is a common phenomenon in South India.

Here music has always been recognised as handmaid of religion and a help for the realisation of the Supreme. In such a country it is no wonder that music is used freely for every possible purpose, in villages, in the paddy fields, in work houses and so on.

Several varieties of these folk songs are found all over Southern India, especially in the Tamil districts. The most important of these are Kummi, Thambangu, Tappa Lavani and Chindu with several varieties like Vazhinadaichinthu, Nondichinthu, Kavadichinthu, etc. Of these the Kavadichinthu (so called on account of its association with the carrying of Kavadi by the devotees on their shoulders) has attained great popularity and importance among the folk songs for various reasons. It has an intrinsic musical charm of its own, it depicts the universal longing of the human

soul for union with the object of its devotion, the Nayaka-Nayaki bhava bhakti which is the background of all devotional literature—the Deity in this case being Lord Subramania, the most popular Deity in Tamil Nad. (Tradition has it that it was Lord Subramania who gave us the *muttamil*, Iyal, Isai and Nataka (literature, music and dance-drama)

Annamalai Reddiar—blessed be his memory—the famous author of Kavadichindu has laid the Tamil Nad under a deep debt of obligation by his great gift of the Kavadichindu which is classical in its theme, diction and rendering

There are also other varieties of folk-songs which convey moral and philosophical truths, teach proverbs and narrate historical events and so on

One striking act which emerges from a study of the folk songs is that, while the tunes may not conform to the rules of Lakshana, they are not lacking in aesthetic quality, on the other hand it almost looks as if their very charm and beauty are the result of this apparent disregard of the requirements of technique

PERFORMANCES

1 First we have the *Classical* performance of an expert musician in which stress is laid on the technical side of music.

The general structure of the programme of a typical Music Concert in the South is significant. It generally begins with a *Varna* (a technical piece whose entire form has already been fixed by the composer and in which the singer is not expected to do anything on his own) Then follow a number of kritis, also composed by great musicians, here the singer has freedom to add his own decoration and ornamentation within the limits set by the composer Then comes the climatic part of the programme, Ragalapana and Pallavi, where the singer is free to improvise and reveal his creative faculty The programme generally ends with

ments were used and several singers also took part. They were called *Vrindas* I would suggest that this word Vrinda may be used in Indian music instead of *orchestra*, so as to avoid possible misunderstanding

SOME OUTSTANDING FIGURES IN MUSIC

Bharata, author of the famous "Natya Sastra", is perhaps the earliest known musicologist. Matanga, Parswadeva, Narada, Sarngadeva, Ramamatya, Somanatha, Venkatamakhi (author of the treatise "Chaturdandiprakasika"), Ahobala, Tulajaji are among the prominent lakshanakartas Among the composers in the South, Talapakkam Chinnayya, Purandaradas, Narayanatirtha, Kshetrajna, Sadasiva Brahmendra, Margadarsi Sesha Iyengar (who is referred to by Maharaja Swati Tirunal as providing the model basis for his own compositions), Pachamiriyam Adiappayya and Gurumurti Sastri stand out prominently in the pre-Thyagaraja period The famous Trinity, Thyagaraja, Shyama Sastri and Muthuswami Dikshitar flooded the whole of South India with their brilliant and heart-moving lyrical compositions Swati Tirunal was another brilliant composer, almost contemporary to the Trinity Among other composers may be mentioned Arunachala Kavi, Anayya, Gopalakrishna Bharati, Muthu Thandavar, Subbaraya Sastri, Kavi Kunjara Bharati, Mysore Sadasiva Rao, Tanjore Ponnayya, Karur Dakshinamurti Sastri, Sabhapati Iyer, Tachur Singaracharulu, Tiruvottiyoor Thyagarajaiyer, Pattanam Subrahmania Iyer, Ramnad Srinivasa Iyengar and others Among the living composers two stand out as striking personalities Mysore Vasudevacharya, the 93 years old veteran, is happily amongst us and is still composing and also giving training to deserving disciples Kalakshetra where he is now doing his service to Goddess Sarasvati may be justly proud of him The other composer whose songs have moved and are still moving the hearts

ment, has been accepted as one of our avowedly important instruments, almost indispensable to concerts in South India

It may be mentioned here that Indian music is based entirely on human voice All compositions are confined to the range of human voice and so they range only in three octaves—not even over the entire range of three octaves, the actual range works out only to about two octaves, i e, the middle octave (madhyasthayi), about half of the lower (mandarasthayi) and half of the higher (tarasthayi) octaves Instruments only follow the voice and even when they are played solo they re-produce only vocal music.

SOME UNRECOGNISED ASPECTS

Music was recognised as having wider and deeper influences than are obvious The effect of music on human emotions was studied carefully and relations established between some ragas and some typical emotions Our ancient scholars and teachers have always recognised this inner, subtler and deeper aspect of music. It can calm a troubled mind and bring it peace, it can quieten a restless child and lull it to sleep, it can even subdue wild animals and serpents, it can cure certain types of physical and emotional ills In a recent article under the title "Doctors now use Musical Therapy" I read a number of cases in which famous physicians and surgeons used music with great success in their work. Certain ragas were associated with certain periods of the day and also with certain seasons of the year

Miraculous powers have also been attributed to music, it is believed that some ragas can cause rain and others fire and so on Actual occurrences of such phenomena have also been recorded. The power of music to cure mental and physical disorders has been recognised, here is an interesting and useful field of research.

Above all, there is something inherently noble, beautiful and spiritual about Indian music. There can be no enjoyment more impersonal and sublimating than what it offers It

In conclusion, I should like to make one suggestion The Sangita Nataka Akademi which is making laudable efforts to help all phases of Culture in the country, will do well to organise an Annual Festival of Karnatak Music, in co operation with other music institutions in the south In such festivals opportunities may be afforded for the best exponents to be heard by all who like to hear them and also for rising artists to reveal their hidden talents to the music-loving public Also recitals by North Indian musical experts should be arranged so as to give opportunity for mutual understanding and appreciation between the North and the South After all Indian Music is essentially one unique system, only rendering varies in the North and the South These two different styles of rendering only go to enrich the musical culture of the nation

Note I

The names and the vibration ratios of the 22 intervals in the scale

Sl No	Name	Ratio
1	Shadja	1
2	Ekasruti Rishabha	256/243
3	Dvisruthi Rishabha	16/15
4	Trisruti Rishabha or Suddha Rishabha	10/9
5	Chatusruti Rishabha	9/8
6	Suddha Gandhara	
7	Sadharana Gandhara	6/5
8	Antara Gandhara	
9	Chyutamadhyama Gandhara	5/4 81/64
10	Suddha Madhyama	4/3
11	Tivra Madhyama	45/32

Note —

1 The name adopted here are those with regard to which there is greatest agreement

2. The ratios are (70 cents) and more or less derived from the directions given by Ahobala

12	Prati Madhyama	64/45
13	Chyutapanchama Madhyama	40/27
14	Panchama	3/2
15	Ekasruti Dhaivata	128/81
16	Dvisruti Dhaivata	8/5
17	Trisruti Dhaivata or Suddha Dhaivata	5/3
18	Chatussruti Dhaivata	27/16
19	Suddha Nishada	16/9
20	Kaisiki Nishada	9/5
21	Kakali Nishada	15/8
22	Chyutashadja Nishada	243/128
23	Tara Shadja	2

3 A careful study of Bharatha's Natya Sastra indicates that he recognised three different kinds of Ekasruti (micro-tone) of values (90 cents $\frac{256}{243}$, $\frac{25}{24}$ (22 cents) $\frac{81}{80}$ (22 cents)

4 Chyutapanchama madhyama (40/27) is the Panchama of Ma-Grama

NOTE II

It is possible that in earliest times in the history of Indian music the ideas of harmony and melody were both current. There are references in ancient Tamil literature to attempts at harmonisation. But subsequently they must have come to what might be called the parting of the ways. They must have found that harmony and melody could not co-exist and so they had to choose between them. As by then the raga concept had taken root (being in line with the characteristic Indian temperament, which is essentially individualistic) harmony had to be given up and melody began to hold the entire field.

Part II

OTHER ARTS

Art is one of those ideas which evade clear definition Being abstract in its nature it does not lend itself to being expressed in concrete things which our logical mind can easily grasp All the same, several definitions have been given, each having a bearing on some special aspect of Culture in its most general sense Goethe called it "the magic of the soul", Schiller thought of it as that "which gives man his lost dignity" To Carlyle it is "the dis-imprisoned soul of fact" He also says, "In all true works of art wilt thou discern Eternity looking through time, the Godlike rendered visible" Wagner defines it in various ways 'The pleasure one takes in being what he is", "The highest manifestation of the communal life in man", "The accomplishment of our desire to find ourselves again among the phenomena of the external world", and so on Another thinker looks upon it as "a way of hastening our growth by vicariously acquiring experiences" Dr Ananda Coomaraswami considers the artist not as "one who makes but one who finds" A. Clutton Brock puts it in a very striking way when he says "When all the knowledge, skill and passion of mankind are poured into an acknowledgment of something greater than themselves, then that acknowledgment is Art" Of course Art is all this, but it is also much more, it is the essence of Life, a way of revelation of Life and its meaning, an expression of the "soul of fact", to use Carlyle's phrase

Art in India has always been considered a path of realisation of the Ultimate Reality It is spiritual in its outlook, idealistic in expression and sublime in interpretation It is not merely a matter of sensuous enjoyment, not a luxury to be enjoyed by the leisured rich class of people or zamindars or state rulers, not something to amuse oneself with

Shri Krishna as *Bhuvana Sundara* (the most beautiful in the universe), Madhusoodana Saraswati, the great advaitic scholar, described Shri Krishna as *Soundaryasarasarvaswa* (the entire essence of Beauty) But for His Beauty how can there be anything beautiful in creation? Love of Beauty in the abstract is one of the most effective weapons with which to fight the attractions of the lower world

The artist tries to bring Godhead nearer to us by working along the line of the Beauty-aspect of God. Man is a miniature God, he has in himself potentially all the Divine faculties He may have only a little knowledge now, but he will become a great knower in due course, he may have only a little love at present, but at some future date he will be capable of infinite Love Every aspect of Divinity has its counterpart in man and man can reach Divinity by developing and sublimating one or other of these aspects in him Artists, by developing the creative aspect in themselves, try to reveal to us something of God's Beauty down here

So, art is verily a path to the Supreme, it is a Yoga, Soundarya Yoga, so to say Artists are, at any rate ought to be, great yogis in their own way Great Rishis and Devas have been great artists, the authorship of some of our art traditions is traced to great sages The very names given to some of the Deities show how much emphasis was laid upon this aspect of Art *Nataraja* is the *arch-dancer*, *Ranganatha* means the *stage manager* All art expressions in India had a spiritual background.

In ancient India Art went hand in hand with Religion In one sense we may say, Art turned inward is Religion and Religion turned outward is Art Temples have been repositories of all arts, they have enshrined not only idols of deities but art treasures as well The architecture of some

of our temples dazzles us, some works of sculpture amaze us with their exquisite beauty Why? They are not the work of ordinary masons and carpenters, they are the work of great *bhaktas* in whom the love of God welled up and found expression in such work, they lived but to serve God, they effaced themselves in their work of love, they did not care to be known to posterity as great artists, their work was anonymous, the only thing that mattered to them was the offering they made to the Lord in the form of such art treasures These great works of art were not made to order so to say, they came as a result of a deep inner urge and hence their unique greatness This is the uniqueness of Indian Art

We have heard of the great Haridas Swami, the teacher of Tansen of the court of Akbar Once Akbar asked Tansen what was the secret of the unique charm of his music, and Tansen said, "Sire, what is my music when compared to the music of my master, Haridas Swami !" Akbar was greatly intrigued to hear this and urged Tansen to take him to the Swami and after much persuasion Akbar was taken to the ashrama of Haridas Tansen had warned the Emperor already not to expect the Swami to sing but of his own accord They waited till the mood came to him one day and the Swami sang Was it mere song? No! It was a new revelation Akbar felt lifted out of his mundane world and borne on the wings of Eternity to realms of sheer Beauty, Charm, Peace and Bliss Turning to Tansen he said, "I never knew that there could be such music I thought yours was the limit of perfection But by the side of this music yours appears lifeless and empty How is it that having learnt at his feet you have not caught the soul of his art?" Tansen smiled and said, "I can never sing like my master, it is true that I learnt the art from him, I might have mastered the technicalities of the art, but there is this difference I sing to your bidding but my master sings to no man's bidding,

he sings when the urge comes from inside and that makes all the difference"

To the artist the outer world of phenomena is but a reflection of Divine Thought and he tries to get at that Thought by the contemplation of its reflection down here The outer expression has a meaning only in so far as it reflects some idea behind, this idea is more significant to the artist than its outer expression He wants to understand things not as they seem but as they really are So to the artist the phenomenal world is only a means to enable him to get at the noumenal world behind, to him objects and events have a new meaning, they have a message for him and it is this message that he tries to give through his art creations Like the old duke in Shakespeare's "As you like it", the artist finds "tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones and good (may I add truth and beauty) in everything" To the artist

"A careless shoe-string in whose tie

I see a wild civility

Doth more bewitch me than when Art

Is too precise in every part"

Thus we see why Indian art has been Idealistic and Symbolic rather than realistic To the Indian artist art is not an imitator, is not reproducer, it is on the other hand a creator, an interpreter The so-called "realism" in art is foreign to Indian art expression A work of art is to him an expression of one's experience It is also a universal language of deep human emotions It must express some of the great realities of life It must be a symbol of some of the ever-lasting principles which sustain the world This we shall see best when we take Indian painting or Indian sculpture. The Indian painter gives only second place to

realistic reproduction If he paints a person he paints not only that person but the type to which that person belongs not only a passing mood but the real character of the person, and he attempts to express through that painting what God wants to express through that individual. And so it is the combination of what that person is at the moment, what the person generally is and what God wants him to be If it is merely a question of reproducing that person on a piece of canvas or paper, we do not require a great painter for it, a photographic plate will do the trick. Why then do we go in for great artists to give us great works of painting? It is because of this essential difference between mere imitation and purposeful creative expression Great artists deal primarily with types and only secondarily with individuals belonging to that type Type, rather arche-type, is the common idea behind all the individuals of that type We often deal in our minds only with these types And only in trying to visualise mentally we come down from the world of types into the world of forms While there may be hundreds of tables, the typical table, that is the idea of the table or the quality of being a table, is a common concept and it is these conceptual types behind material forms that the Indian artist is chiefly concerned with

It is something like this that the Manus and other Master-builders are doing all the time They get glimpses of God's Plan and the great types in His Mind which have to be brought down and materialised here, and build forms here approaching more and more those types The Manu builds form after form, works at it, improves on it, so that it may come nearer and nearer to the ideal form as seen in His plan That is also what an artist does, though in a different way altogether Every work of a true artist is only an attempt to bring down God's ideas so that the less evolved amongst us may be helped to understand God's Plan for us And so the artist presents to us great types into which

we can group all the things around us and thereby get a glimpse of the harmony and orderliness of God's creation

In drama we have this aspect of art clearly brought out. The immortal lines of Shakespeare,

" . . . All the world's a stage
And all the men and women merely players,"

are as true as that the stage is a world and all the characters in it represent men and women of different types The characters in a great drama are not merely individuals but great types And by studying one such character we come to understand a number of persons belonging to that type A Dushyantha, an Iago, a Hamlet, a Sakuntala, is a type and lives in all ages and in all countries Each presents to us a type, but a type akin to that in the Mind of God The dramatist sums up in himself many varieties of experiences and out of them spins the types and presents them to the world To quote C Jinarajadasa, "Shakuntala moves men's hearts in the west as in the east, and now as of old All Shakespeare's great characters are still with us, translate his plays into any language, and though as poems they lose much, the characters in them lose nothing at all By studying each character—rather, by understanding each with our intuitions—we know the psychology of hundreds of souls of that type If we but understand Macbeth or Othello with our intuitions, then all men of that type are understood by us, we know their past actions, and we can anticipate what they will think and do, and so help them and ourselves . . . Through the types in the great dramas we look into the archetypes of thoughts and emotions, and of souls themselves".

By a study of these characters we can anticipate experiences and guard ourselves against pitfalls It is not neces-

and understand the symbology of such figures he will have to view these from the proper standpoint, else he will probably be repulsed by the outer form and miss their true significance

It is also on this principle that rules have been framed for image-making, architecture and so forth Great artists who have sensed archetypes have given us certain directions, they are only the minimum conditions that must be fulfilled if the work is to present types and not merely be an imitation Beyond these the artist is entirely free Such directions, if they come from a great Master-artist. supply a tradition of immense value to others who aspire to become artists If it were possible to have minute directions coming from such a master-mind, the work done in accordance therewith is bound to be remarkable in an ideal manner

True Art enables us to rise through the outer phenomena to the Reality behind them, to pierce through the limitations around us and realise the unlimited, in short, to understand the mind of God in relation to His creations We can get an idea of this distinguishing quality of art if we consider the scenery painting and the dramatic art. All philosophies tell us that there are two great limitations under which we evolve and to which we must be subject as long as manifestation lasts, all other kinds of limitations can be analysed and resolved into these two fundamental limitations, viz., limitations of Space and Time, the two great pillars supporting the complicated structure of this manifested universe. In scenery painting the artist attempts to lift us above the limitation of space A certain amount of spatial expanse is necessary to produce a particular effect on our consciousness If the same effect can be produced by a much less quantity of space of lower dimensions, then it shows that there lies a method of freeing ourselves from the space-limitation By continuing this process of depending

less and less upon space for the subjective modification which is ordinarily the result of objective space it is theoretically possible to get beyond space. That is what we have in scenery painting The scenery represented in it might have extended over many many miles in actual space in the three dimensions, but all that you have on a few square feet of canvas or paper It is only when you relate it to things around you that you begin to cognise the actual size of the canvas But if you concentrate your attention upon the picture and remain oblivious of other things the impression you get is the same as if you were standing in front of a vast scenery So, while Nature requires many hundreds of cubic miles to produce an impression upon you, the artist accomplishes the same object on a canvas of a few square inches There we have clearly an attempt to transcend the limitation of space.

What scenery painting is to space that the drama is to time. Incidents of many years are there presented in the space of a few hours, for the time you feel as if you are moving in time with the characters Not only this, if it be really a good play written by an artistic genius you are to some extent lifted out of time and placed 'beyond time', where the past, the present and the future coalesce into one "Eternal Now". The characters and the incidents of the drama will not be merely particular individuals or occurrences but will be true for all ages. Experiences of many centuries would be gathered up and presented through the action of the play; and out of the different impressions produced there will emerge a thought which is independent of the time of action of the play or of particular characters in it, but will represent a truth which will obtain at all times and under all conditions. In fact, the great dramas are the great generalisations of the process of nature at all times, the characters in them do not pertain to any particular period of human history As William Hazlitt put it,

"the stage is an epitome, a bettered likeness of the world with the dull part left out", and so in drama we see the beginnings of a process which will ultimately take us out of time into a condition which is beyond the past, the present and the future

Another important aspect of Art which is not so well recognised is that it gives permanence to ephemeral objects and events in actual life A beautiful sunset occurs in Nature only at a certain time and under certain conditions If the evening sun is hidden behind heavy clouds or if it rains heavily at sunset Nature cannot provide that beautiful sunset So to enjoy a glorious sunset in nature we have to wait for the evening and also for the conditions that will ensure it But a senset painted by an artist is a permanent record of what happens in nature only once in a way, so what is transitory in nature is by Art given an unique permanence and can be enjoyed by us at any time

So also a narration of an incident, however important it be historically and politically, is of immediate interest only for the time being, its repetitions later on will be of little interest. But a poetic version of any occurrence is of perennial interest

Art supplements life and makes it fuller Our world is full of limitations, deficiencies and disappointments, it is very dull and far from what we would like it to be But in an artistic presentation all these gaps are filled, dull parts omitted, all shortcomings made good, with the result that we get a complete picture, an ideal representation which approximates to the idea in the mind of God An artist, however barren his outer life may appear to be, can live a much fuller life by supplementing in his art creations what he misses in actual life Life may be dull, may be lacking in joy, but by integrating it with his art creations the artist

it lifts up, so to say, the several fragments of our emotional nature and places them before us for us to examine and criticise, at the same time it also makes a synthesis of them so that our emotions are the purer, higher and finer for that process It takes us all out of this world's turmoil and places us in those higher realms of being where all is joy and peace All this it does, not so much by cold logic or reasoning, but through the super-rational faculty of intuition, which like a lightning flash illumines our vision and enables us to realise life in a way not ordinarily possible otherwise Music, as Carlyle put it, is truly "the language of the Gods, it is divine" Life should be infinitely poorer without it

Art is essentially a creative faculty, mere imitation is not true art at all And creation is an act of joy and sacrifice too, the very sacrifice being the source of joy We have all of us a bit of that Divine faculty of creation in us, and the Divine artist in us ever seeks to exercise this creative faculty, and every one of us will under that impulse

> " .. something make,
>
> And joy in the making,"

to use the words of an English poet Laureate. Hence it is that true art leads to and springs from joy The two are interdependent The greatest help we can render to art is to remove gloom and sorrow, and spread joy every where An artist if he is to give the best in him for humanity must be given the necessary surroundings for the expression of his art He should have no worry or care, there must be no need for him to think about anything but his own art. He must be well provided for if he is to fulfill his mission in life He is a national asset whom we cannot afford to neglect. Much of our joy in life comes through art and by neglecting

and looking down upon artists we shall be shutting out an important source of joy which makes life a song of never ending sweetness

Human life without art is incomplete, it is barren. While acquisition of knowledge is good in its own way and develops the mental capacity in man, it is through art that his emotional nature (and when this is sublimated, intuitional aspect) is developed best. If one is content only with bread and butter there is little to distinguish him from the beast. So the poet sang "one who is without the gifts of the art of music or poetry is verily a beast devoid of tail and horns" What distinguishes the cultured man from the beast is his capacity to appreciate art One may not be an artist in practice, but ability to appreciate the significance of works of art is necessary for culture There is an old Chinese proverb which says, "if you have two loaves, sell one and buy a lily", the implication being that an object of beauty around you is as important as bread and butter, the latter feeds and builds your body while the former feeds and nourishes your soul Every object of beauty is a messenger of God the Beautiful, and unconsciously draws forth from us response to the Infinite Beauty of God and awakens us to the real significance of things that we see around us

For a balanced cultivation of human emotions there is nothing so powerful as art. Good art purifies our feelings subdues violent passions, rouses higher emotions and sublimates them into something delicate and beautiful The one striking effect will be that the emotions become impersonal With proper artistic training we shall be able to enjoy joy and sorrow impersonally We shall be able to get joy even out of sorrow Ananda, Bliss is above these pairs of opposites, joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain When we witness a tragedy written by a real artist and represented by good actors, we put ourselves *en rapport* with the characters [illegible]

the time being and we weep with the sufferers and laugh with the joyous characters When we do that very weeping we derive an aesthetic pleasure, and for that impersonal, aesthetic, sublimated pleasure, we are tempted to go to the same play over and over again, to weep with the character and vicariously undergo all his suffering

Above all art is a great unifier A real artist is above caste, above creed, above nationality, above sex. A good work of art is appreciated everywhere In some of the exhibitions of Indian art in the western countries, people whose make-up is artistic go into raptures over the great beauty and sublimity which characterise Indian art Art is one of the most effective ways of expressing human soul Human experience is fundamentally the same everywhere. People weep everywhere, love everywhere, smile everywhere Unsophisticated expressions of one's inner being have always a universality about them

Art enriches life. It gives a new meaning to life It gives us a deeper understanding, a more lasting sense of the values of life By making our nature artistic we unconsciously develop a sense of fitness in us We instinctively feel what is good, what is true, and what is not either Our nature becomes so attuned to the harmony and beauty of nature, which is in a sense the Mirror of God, that we, as a matter of habit, go in for the good and the noble and avoid the bad, the ugly and the mean Civilised man having any pretentions to culture should have in him this inner poise which a power to appreciate art brings with it, a poise which enables one to understand things not as they seem, but as they are, to look not merely at an object but through it into the Mind of God which worked and created that object, a poise which helps one to realise

"That Beauty is not, as fond men misdeem
An outward show of things, that only seem,

ideas still persist?" We have to bestir ourselves, rid ourselves of the old mental cob-webs and enable our nation to give her gift of art, culture, and philosophy to the world We have to hold aloft the great ideals of our Arts The power and strength so characteristic of our Architecture, the delicacy and idealism of our paintings, the balance and beauty of poise of our Sculpture, the grace and rhythm of our Dance, the subtlety and spiritual appeal of our Music, all these have to be preserved and vitalised

23 Indian Classical Dance

Art in India is a sacred vocation, it was considered a method of approach to Reality through a process of intuiting Divine Mind in the expression of that Mind in the phenomena around us Art and Religion were indivisible as it were All the greatest works of Indian Art were inspired by religious fervour Art without the ensouling devotion is something foreign to Indian Culture To separate spiritual outlook from Art is to make it a dead shell without the ensouling life

Dance is a composite art, enfolding in its range several other fine arts as well Of course music goes with dance, dance has also in it the elements of sculpture, poetry and drama In one sense it may be said to be a complete art, a comprehensive art

Dancing is imminent in Life, whenever there is an emotional exhuberance in a sentient being, it expresses itself in some outer movement of the limb, the nimble antelope leaps and jumps out of its exhuberance of life, the bird sitting on a tree branch at sunrise greets the sun with joy and bursts into song accompanied by graceful movement of its head, the little child shouts and jumps in upwelling joy Why! Nature herself dances in joy at spring time, God himself dances in Ananda In such movements expressive of inner feeling we have the beginnings of Dance From the

Temples being seats of religion, there were attached to their staff artists to supply the necessary music and dance items in the daily routine of worship As a matter of fact some of the greatest works of architecture and sculpture were executed in and for temples in a spirit of devotion and consecration A spirit of dedication characterised these artists in their service to Godhead, it was a great privilege to be so dedicated and artists who were so dedicated were held in great honour and reverence. The ladies who were thus dedicated to the temple as dancers were called devadasis, servants of the Lord, a glorious title indeed! What a privilege to be a server of the Lord in however humble a capacity! This idea of dedicating qualified women for temple service and temple ritual is not peculiar to India, it had been in vogue in other civilizations and religions In ancient Greece and in Egypt and even in Japan, this custom had been current We have all heard of vestal virgins In India, if the art of Dance had stood the test of time and survived all the onslaughts which India had to face in the course of her history, we owe it in no small measure to these devadasis who have carried on the art tradition unsullied, especially in South India (In music also, it is South India that has preserved the essential features of the Indian musical system) Whatever may be said of the devadasi system from other standpoints, one cannot be too grateful to it for the great service it has done to ensure the preservation of correct traditions and technique Even today we can find true tradition and correct technique only in the families of the old devadasis and nattuvanars (the dance masters)

The system of dedicating some women to temples for dance was a necessity The dance art is in several ways different from other arts, not all can be creative artists, a certain inborn aptitude (vasana) is essential In the case of dance several other factors have to be considered, the dan-

degradation and falling off from true purpose is the result of human weakness Are temples now what they were of old? Are the various mathas discharging their functions properly today? The human hand has polluted many an institution In the name of God, man hates man, all the wonderful gifts of science which can make a heaven of this earth are prostituted for unholy and inhuman purposes Why then should the devadasi system alone have been singled out for this victimisation? Has its suppression really improved the moral standard of the community? I wonder and wonder!

The degradation which set in went so low that there was launched an anti-nautch movement and this gained such momentum that the elite thought it beneath their dignity to attend a nautch And an English lady named Miss Pennant came all the way from England to help and vitalise this movement. It was at this juncture that there came a wave of a general art renaissance in the country and, thanks to the pioneer work of Sm Rukmini Devi, dance art which was under a taboo began to hold up its head Reaction set in, the old prejudice against nautch began to wane, it looked as if the pendulum was swinging the other way It generally happens that when a violent reaction sets in there is a tendency to over-do things. Let me quote here what I have said elsewhere

"And now, in this swing back, where are we? What has been achieved? Has the art come back really to its own? Before we answer these questions it is worthwhile to keep in mind some fundamental ideas regarding the art of dance Now the word seems to cover all kinds of movements, we hear of dance here, there, everywhere A child of seven or eight dressed in costly clothes and decked with brilliant jewels, standing in front of footlights with coloured flood-light playing on her body in and out of season, with or without rhyme or reason, leaps and jumps on the stage

and hundreds and thousands of people forming the audience clap their hands lustily; the girl jumps all the more briskly. There you have a picture of what now often passes off as a dance." The next day, the papers are full of it; and if the child is well-connected encomiums are showered on her in abundance. Poor child, I have only pity for her!"

Is this Bharatanatya? No, a thousand times no! It is a great art with its own highly finished technique, it is something like a great ritual in which every item has its significant part to play; the body and the mind are attuned in a kind of yoga.

"Music is to be produced by the throat, the hands to be used to bring out the meaning of the song, the eyes should express the appropriate bhava and the feet keep rhythm all the time."

Art is in one sense the essence of a Racial experience. To tinker with it with impunity is an inexcusable affront to the Muse of Art. We have somehow here in the South preserved the classical dance. Dr Tagore witnessing the performance of a Kathakali actor said, "Those of us belonging to North India, who have lost memory of the pure Indian classical dance, have experienced a thrill of delight at the exhibition of dancing given by a student of the Kala mandalam, whose technique of dance was taken solely from Kathakali. I feel grateful at the assurance it has brought to us that the ancient art is still a living tradition of India with its varied grace and vigour and subtleties of dramatic expression." Shall we allow such a tradition to be vitiated?

There are two fundamental aspects to this Art which may be broadly called Tandava and Lasya. In the former, movement and rhythm are dominant features, in the latter, bhava and rasa are all in all. As we all know, rhythmic, balanced movements of the body well planned and carefully executed have a tremendous effect on our emotions. This

has been proved beyond doubt Such exercises help in the first place to build a healthy, nimble and adaptable body This in itself is a great thing Then, if these exercises are done in groups they build up our instinctive sense of comradeship, cooperation, subjecting one's own personality to the needs of the group Individual angularities are rounded off and a collective consciousness is developed This is a desirable emotional reaction If in addition the children are well dressed and the group chosen with an eye to artistic effect and the 'dances' are performed in artistic surroundings, the result will be remarkable and the spectators derive a real aesthetic pleasure, though this pleasure is mostly ocular

When we come to Abhinaya (lasya aspect) it is an entirely different matter There lies the whole of the snag Here it is a question of bhava, feeling and expressing various shades (including the subtlest) of feeling through gestures, poses (mudras) and facial features Though there is no definite restriction as to the theme of the piece chosen for abhinaya it has been an almost unbroken custom to choose *sringara rasa* pieces for the purpose. There are, among other reasons, two prominent ones behind this All art is Divine and meant to lead Jivatma to union with Paramatma Human soul is ever-seeking union (yoga) with the Oversoul and this search for union is bhakti, devotion They speak of various forms of this devotion and one of the forms, perhaps the most effective one is nayaka-nayaki bhava, the human soul surrendering itself as the beloved (nayaki) of the One Lover (nayaka) of the Universe. Even the obviously erotic songs when properly interpreted will reveal this high purpose.

Also pieces composed for abhinaya are specially made for the purpose, they contain words which lend themselves effectively to the gesture language. A devotional or erotic song may be quite good as a song, but if it is to be danced

ive in a higher plane and who interpret everything in terms of Divine play, Iswara Lila Taking an ordinary young girl n her teens, one may consider the possible reaction on ier emotional nature of dancing out such themes I may be permitted to quote here what Sri N Raghunatha Aiyar aid in his presidential address to the South Indian Natya-ala Conference held in December last

"The feeling of grave exaltation and earnest devoutness, is of one participating in some holy mystery, has now ill but disappeared On the middle class households from which most of the votaries of the art of dance as well as he audience are now being drawn, secularism has settled ike a blight. To imagine that a girl taught to render with ibhinaya a Krishna Karnamrita sloka keeps her mind anchor-ed firmly in the faith that it is not carnal love that she depicts but the lila of the Lord, is to assume the pervading nfluence of a home atmosphere which is simply not there"

Many of the present day dance recitals are an eye-sore to a true art lover It is more a tendency towards exhibitionism than anything related to art "This tendency seems to be the dominant note in our modern dance performances The undue importance which is being given to the loudness and brilliance of the costume and jewellery, to the lighting arrangements with flood-light playing on the person of the dancer, to the frequent change of dress lacking at times even a sense of appropriateness, all this indicates the growing "exhibitionistic" tendency, which if allowed to go uncurbed, may eat the very vitals of our social, moral and cultural well-being In this respect our nautch-girls of old were definitely on the better and safer side They were true to tradition in almost every detail, their technique was strictly traditional, their dress too was according to pattern evolved by long years of experience They did not depend for the success of their art on such accidental

appurtenances like costume and lighting they were so sure of their technique and had deep faith in its artistic perfection. Their dress on the whole was most suited for dance and was governed by consideration of modesty and decency much more than what we witness in some of modern dances, especially the dances in which our present-day cinema pictures abound Perhaps the less said about this the better"

At one of the recitals of Balasaraswati I happened to hear some remarks which almost shocked me and showed to what extent the taste of the ordinary theatre-goer has been vitiated by this growing tendency towards "exhibitionism" Some of the ladies in the audience were making derisive remarks about Balasaraswati not changing her dress One of them actually asked. "What is the meaning of giving a dance performance without changing dresses!" This clearly showed how the whole idea about Natya and attitude to a Bharatanatya performance had been vitiated and become even perverted. To that lady perhaps dance meant only dress-ringing and nothing more. She evidently forgot that she was witnessing a Bharatanatya performance and not a hotchpotch show with items like Kurathi dance Snake-charmer dance Peacock dance, Beggar dance and so on (heaven alone knows what these dances mean) all jumbled into a two hours 'dance-performance." At this rate the real dance of India the dance which was considered sacred and fit to be offered in devotion to the Lord may go into oblivion and in its place a kind of secular hybrid travesty of art may masquerade as the art of dance and lead us to a sort of artistic suicide. Heaven save us from such a calamity!

Even taking only the Tandava side of dance one may doubt the wisdom of young girls exhibiting themselves in front of footlights in georgeous dress (or undress), to a packed house of a thousand and more people not all of whom look to the higher side of art expression. Can we

say with any justification that girls of twelve or thereabouts who are coming out to dance in such large numbers of late, will be able to command the necessary inner poise and self-possession which come out of maturity and artistic intuition?

I know that several ardent dance promoters ask, "Did not our celestial damsels dance? Did not princesses in our ancient royal courts learn and practise dancing?" Well, the answer is quite simple. I trust that we do not wish our daughters to become Urvasis and Menakas whose ethical code is not in tune with ours As for the princesses, in the first place we have no statistical data in the matter It is quite probable that several of our ancient princesses were given training in dance But did any of them come forward to dance before a crowded house in a public place? Certainly not

There are some great enemies to Art which its votaries have to guard against. In the history of any art, there comes a stage when the life side and the form side, of the art begin to pull at each other and in the struggle the form wins This success of the form over the life sounds the death knell to the art Then again the tendency to feel self-sufficient which comes to many artists leads to stagnation and hence to atrophy A third enemy is mere imitation without imbibing the inspiration which makes the art a living thing Perhaps the most potent and dangerous enemy is the pseudo critic who, calling himself a rasika, sets a wrong or spurious standard of appreciation, which is accepted without question by others, with the result that the dancer is slowly veered away from true and correct tradition to false though apparently popular standards This is a subtle and therefore, dangerous enemy If conferences and Sabhas can help in preserving correct and traditional standards in the art of dance by putting their foot down on the wrong and undesirable tendencies which are now

threatening to stifle the art and guarding the art against its enemies, it would be a great act of worship at the altar of the Muse of Art.

A cultured person should be able to appreciate dance music and other arts, he should develop in himself the required sensibility to do this. This does not mean that a cultured person learns any art with a view to take it as his profession or a life job. So any training in art has to meet these two-fold objects: (i) to give intensive training needed for an expert who seeks to make a profession of it, (ii) to give some general training which will enable any cultured person to understand and intelligently appreciate the fine arts.

24. Some Thoughts on Dramatic Art and Kalidasa's Shakuntalam

Ever since man began to use his power of thought he has attempted to understand something of Nature around him and its mystery. The mighty torrent rolling down from the snow-clad peaks, the awe inspiring sound of the thunder, the silent serenity of majestic mountain ranges, the invariable sequence of all processes of nature, have ever filled men's hearts with a deep yearning to understand their meaning. Whether it was an element of fear that first filled the soul of man, or a sense of utter helplessness before the stern and rigid laws which ruled all happenings, or again a peculiar feeling of suppressed elation at the beauty and grandeur of Nature's workshop, there is ever deep at heart, in the innermost recesses of the soul-nature in man, a longing for understanding, feeling, and realising the source of all the apparent mystery which ever surrounds him manifesting itself in newer and newer forms in the process of time. Many have approached the solution partial or total as the case may be through philosophy; others have approached it through devotion while many others have sought and are still seeking it through the service of fellow beings. In

one or other of these and many other forms, man has tried to solve the problem of existence, the relation of man to God, the relation of the phenominal world to its creator Whatever the path, the final goal is the same, the sensing of the Reality behind all the fleeting forms and ephemeral phenomena. And one of the most useful, but probably not so very popular, of these paths is the path of Art This path has not got so many avowed votaries as the other paths, or at any rate, many do not recognise in Art one of the most potent factors in the progress of the human soul towards the Divine But none the less, it is true that just as we can approach God behind nature through his Wisdom, Love, or Activity, so also we can approach and sense Him through His aspect of Beauty God is as beautiful as he is wise or loving, and the philosophy of the Beautiful is as good and consistent a system of philosophy as any other Orpheus and Plato, and in modern times Ruskin and others, have attempted to realise God through Art, all great artists, whether they be poets or sculptors, dramatists or painters, architects or musicians, are all the time trying to realise, through their art, God in His aspect of Beauty

What is Art then? Art is a means by which the artist brings down something of the nature of God to our world of physical happenings, it enables us to rise through the outer phenomena to the Reality behind them, to understand Nature from the standpoint of the Creator, to pierce through the limitations around us and realise the unlimited, in short, to understand the mind of God in relation to His creation and that through that creation itself That which helps us to accomplish this object, in a greater or smaller degree, is alone real Art

Philosophy tells us that there are two great limitations which have been imposed on us and to which we must be subject as long as manifestation lasts, they are the limitations of Time and Space, the two great fundamental pillars

" All the world's a stage
And all the men and women merely players "

are as much true as that the stage is a world, and all the characters in it represent men and women of different types The dramas of the true artist "do not depict actions of mere individuals, but of individuals who are representative of types " " 'SAKUNTALAM' moves men's hearts in the West as well as in the East, and now as of old All Shakespeare's great characters are still with us, translate his plays into any language, and though as poems they lose much, the characters in them lose nothing at all By studying each character, we know the psychology of hundreds of souls of that type .. Through the types in the great dramas, we look into the archetypes of thoughts and emotions, and of souls themselves "

And what is this archetype? It is the type in the mind of God God plans in His mind ere He creates and produces forms down here, these exist in His mind as ideas, it is these ideas that we call archetypes An archetype when it descends into the world of forms and concrete things manifests itself in various shapes The idea behind is one, but the concrete manifestation of that idea may be manifold For example, let us take the human type called the Teutonic The Germans and the British, and several other nations of Europe belong to this type, but they are all different one from the other A type is the generalisation of a number of particular things belonging to that type All the multifarious things we see around us, exist in the mind of God as archetypes, and the function of the true artist is to enable us to sense them through his works Shakespeare's Iago is not a mere individual, but a type, there were, are and probably there will be many Iagos in the world, so also a Dushyanta or a Sakuntala They all represent types akin to those in the mind of God The artist sums up in

21st days and so on, the waxing and the waning of the moon depend on that number It is also interesting to note that Shakespeare when he speaks of the world as a stage divides the life of man into seven stages

> "And one man in his time plays many parts
> His acts being seven ages, . "

Might it not be that Kalidasa wanted to show that this drama was to represent the world with the seven great stages and so divided it into seven acts? I would even go further and try to show that there is some analogy between the seven stages mentioned by Shakespeare and the seven acts of "Shakuntalam" In the first act we are introduced to the heroine, Shakuntala, in all her innocence and simplicity of Ashrama life, tended and fondly looked after by her foster-father and other hermits, and this corresponds to the first stage of Shakespeare, 'the infant in the nurse's arms' Shakuntala is here verily a child in the drama of life that was to be played later on by her Then comes,

> "The whining school boy with his satchel
> And shining morning face, creeping like snail,
> Unwilling to School"

In the second act we find, Dushyanta who had come to the forest to hunt and thereby discharge his duty as Kshatriya king, is unwilling to hunt, he brings forward all sorts of excuses and declines to hunt like an unwilling school boy Then comes the stage of,

> "the Lover,
> Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
> Made to his mistress's eye-brow"

It appears as though Shakespeare summed up in two lines the whole action of the third Act of "Shakuntalam" It is in this act that the love between Dushyanta and Shakun-

tala is fully worked out and we find both 'sighing like furnace', each with a ballad made to the other

The next act appears to have no obvious connection with the fourth stage of Shakespeare, the soldier, but still we can find some of the characteristics of the soldier in the sage Kanva, the main character in the action of the fourth act Kanva is a soldier fighting in the spiritual realm, and just as our ordinary soldier does not mind his personal considerations and looks on his body as only the property of the State which has a right to claim it when needed, so also Kanva, in spite of all his affection for the sweet Shakuntala looks upon her as only a trust to be handed over to him who had a right to claim her The last verse in the fourth act brings out this idea pointedly

When we come to the fifth act, we find the king discharging his duties as an impartial judge irrespective of his own inclinations Charming as she is, Shakuntala cannot warp his judgement Though his inclinations tend to make him lenient towards Shakuntala, the king declines to swerve from the path of justice, and this is analogous to the fifth stage of Shakespeare When the lost ring is put into Dushyanta s hands and the whole succession of events flashes across his memory, he loses zest in everything and begins to moralise on his condition as well as that of other childless people He is much emaciated and just as in Shakespeare the man in the sixth stage finds,

> "His youthful hose well saved a world too wide
> For his shrunk shank,"

Dushyanta in the sixth act finds his golden bangle too loose for his shrunk arm The "last scene of all that ends this strange eventful history is second childishness, mere oblivion" We meet again Shakuntala in an Ashrama as we saw her in the first act, surrounded by hermits and in the bliss of reunion all the past misery is sunk in oblivion. We

find none of those things that marked the intervening period of pain, 'sans everything' of sorrow, and there is an end of all trouble So there is a remarkable analogy between the seven acts of "Shakuntalam" and the seven stages of Shakespeare's world drama.

Again, see how balanced the construction is, there is perfect symmetry, the acts from the beginning and the end bear a close resemblance to one another in their actions and scenes The first act opens with Dushyanta riding his car driven by his charioteer, while in the seventh act, we find him in the car of Indra run by the hands of Mathali, Indra's charioteer The main action in these two acts is the meeting of Dushyanta and Shakuntala, in the first act, he meets her for the first time, and in the seventh, he meets her first after the restoration of his memory regarding the events connected with Shakuntala In the second act we find the love-sick king extolling the charms of his beloved to his friend, Mathavya, the Vidooshaka, and this is also the main action of the sixth act, where the king, with all his past memories vitified once again, is panting for his beloved, and Vidooshaka is the person on whom the vents all his eulogies about her In the third act, the hero and the heroine meet and marry, while in the fifth they meet as husband and wife The fourth act stands quite apart and has nothing in common with any of the other acts, the very atmosphere in this act is unique and is entirely foreign to the sentiments which characterise the action of the other acts

As regards delicate touches and skilful avoidance of repetitions one can quote dozens of instances In the first act where Shakuntala's friend narrates the story of Vishwamitra and Menaka the king interrupts her and saves her the embarrassment of having to narrate apparently indelicate incidents In the third act where the king and Shakuntala meet alone in the bower Gautami is introduced just

shuns the world and goes into retreat in a jungle or a cave, he could love with human love but in a sublimated way, he could look into the future and foresee the fate hanging over Shakuntala, but he would not interfere with the natural Law of karma He knew on his arrival at his Ashrama that Shakuntala had accepted the hand of the king of her own accord, but he accepts the inevitable and proceeds to arrange for sending his foster-daughter to her husband's home He loves her with all the warmth of a real father, but all the time there is a certain background of high impersonality behind it all He makes all arrangements, fixes the escorts and attends to every detail like an ordinary house-holder The time comes for parting, sage as he is, there is a deep pang, tears well up in his eyes, his voice is choked, but in the presence of Shakuntala he keeps calm, and when she has departed he falls back on his wonted serenity and is the unruffled sage once again A real sage has transcended the experiences of a house-holder, he does not become a sage by merely running away from family ties, a sage is a house-holder sublimated, his range of experience covers all the experiences of a house-holder and comprises much more perhaps beyond the reach of the latter His advice to Shakuntala and his message to the king are the quintessence of wisdom, courtesy, forethought and deep insight into human nature. We love and admire Kanva for these things much more than for his asceticism or abstruse Yoga practices In him we find the consummation of what all real spiritual aspirants strive for

In conclusion I would like to say a word about the general atmosphere of the play Practically all the acts except perhaps the fifth and the sixth are played in forest hermitages where man and beast and trees live as one family, each loving the others like brothers The simple yet elevated life of the hermits is the keynote of the play Man is nearest to his Maker in such surroundings and not in the

easily understand that all the details have been carefully worked out to produce almost a ceremonial effect. The make-up is a very elaborate process and at times it takes three to four hours to make up a particular character They generally start this at dusk, the actor lies down flat and the make-up artist starts his work on the actor, different kinds of flour paste mixed in different colours are used, the process being rather long the actor at times goes to sleep in the course of this process It is not easy to give a precise description of this But the effect is marvellous, the very sight of a made-up Kathakali actor is enough to lift you to a different world

As I have already said there are different kinds of make-up depending upon the character to be depicted There is a very large variety of characters, but they can be grouped under four or five broad headings —

(1) *Paccha* (green) in which green is used for the face, red for the limbs, and black for the eyes and eye-lashes There is a border of a mixture of rice flour and chunam all along the outline of the cheek Outstanding characters like Krishna, Rama, Arjuna and so on, appear in this make-up

(2) *Minukku* in which red and yellow colours dominate on the face. Generally this make-up is used for ladies, sages and Brahmins

(3) There is another variety called *Tadi* with three sub-divisions A beard in appropriate colour and a furred-coat, and a big projection on the forehead and the nose are characteristic of this type White colour is used in the case of Sathvic characters like Hanuman, red in the case of forceful leaders like Bali and black is generally dominant for characters like Kali.

(4) A very elaborate make-up is employed in the variety called Katti, where green and red are blended and

also a white knob is attached to the nose Generally Asura are represented in this make-up

(5) Characters like hunters, clowns, etc., appear in th make-up called Kari, in which black dominates We generall find in this type all kinds of fantastic and comic represe tations

The costumes as already indicated are elaborate, almos to the point of looking fantastic The head gear is a ver striking ornament, the ear-rings are big round discs, silve nails are attached to the fingers, and garlands and bracelet and girdles and jingling anklets are all used The skirt i made of long pieces of embroidered cloth, interspersed an folded, and is so worn round the waist that freedom i assured for acting and dancing

The stage for a Kathakali performance is a very simpl affair A thatched hut in any convenient place is used a a stage, lighting is provided by two big bell-metal lamp well supplied with oil and wicks There is only a single cur tain which is held across the stage by two people holdin its two ends about six feet from the floor There are n scenic arrangements When a character is to appear on th stage the curtain is drawn aside by one of the holder Generally the audience squat on the floor The only furni ture used for any actor to sit is a wooden mortar or wooden stool The background music is provided by number of musicians standing well behind Generally onl such singers are chosen as have very powerful voice which will stand out clear in the midst of the noisy instrument like *Chendai* and *Maddalam*, the gong and resounding cymbals

The Kathakali troupe generally consists of 30 people of whom a dozen are actors Till very recently, almost every rich and aristocratic family of Kerala was maintaining a troupe of its own A Kathakali show is practically an all

night affair, by about 9 P.M the beating of drums indicates that the play is about to begin, the performance proper generally lasts for about 8 hours The intervals between the appearances of the actors are filled by singing and drumming While the play is going on, the theme will be sung by the orchestra and the actor will interpret the action by gestures and by manipulation of the so-called *Mudras* (hand poses — representatives of various types of emotion and action) In the use of these Mudras, strict adherence to traditional methods is compulsory, no deviation is allowed. And all the time there is the background of dance which is indispensable for any Kathakali actor

The dance side of Kathakali is of perennial interest, it supplies rhythmic background and helps to keep the atmosphere of the art. Both the types, Tandava and Lasya, are used, though generally the former dominates In the mode of dance employed by Kathakali actors there is a general indication of the original martial spirit which was dominant in the people of Kerala When a verse or a song has been acted there is a winding called *Kalasa*, in which the dance is worked out to a careful finish through various movements of the feet accompanied by jumping and leaping The time-measure has a prominent place in Kathakali dance and experts use various kinds of tala-measure in the finishing steps of *Kalasa*

Persons who want to become Kathakali actors take to an elaborate system of apprenticeship When very young the body has to be trained, made nimble, elastic and alert. Generally one takes to this training between the ages of 12 and 15 The preliminary exercises are mostly physical, and when the body has become suitable the apprentice is given training in the use of *Mudras*, and then foot work is taught. To get a fairly good standard of proficiency it may take 6 to 8 years of continuous practice.

The art of Kathakali has an uniqueness of its own. It has been developed out of an instinctive recognition of the dance art as a mode of contacting the inner worlds and superphysical beings. It had its own heyday, and, as in other things, there had been ups and downs for this art also In the new life that is now pulsating in this country this art also is having its due share and it is hoped that, while certain improvements based upon modern conveniences may be made, the essential features of the art will be kept intact, so that the art may fulfil its true purpose

26 Drama, a Form of Yoga

To put Drama and Yoga in juxtaposition may appear to be rather strange In popular mind Yoga is associated with certain fantastic notions like a flowing beard, matted hair, etc., while Drama, Music, etc., are related to the lighter side of life. Art has been considered as a luxury to be indulged in by the rich and leisured class This is really not so Culture which includes Drama, Music and all forms of Art as well as Science and Philosophy is an absolute necessity of life and makes for human progress which would become meaningless without art sensitiveness As the poet put it, the person without knowledge of music and letters is distinguished from the animal only by the lack of horns and tail

While the instincts of self preservation and race preservation are fundamental to all life, the great thing that distinguishes a cultured man from the beast is that minimum time is given by him for these two purposes and more time is released for higher cultural pursuits The Chinese saying "If you have two loaves, sell one and buy a lily" is very significant. Culture and Fine Arts are food for our souls just as bread keeps the body going

In India, Art has always been considered a sacred vocation, a path of approach to the Supreme, a road to Reality

Just as God can be realised through His aspects of Wisdom Love and Power, so He can be approached through the aspects of Beauty which is equally an aspect of God We may recall the famous Divine Trinity enunciated by Plato—God the good, the true, the beautiful. The line of approach to God along the line of Beauty has been called Soundarya Yoga, just as we have Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Karma Yoga

In Drama particularly, we can see very many of the elements which go to make for Yoga Yoga is generally understood to mean the path of union with the Source of things—the word Yoga literally means union, and a Yogi always looks to a way of approach to the Ultimate Root of things

Now we shall take some aspects which are common both to Yoga and Drama A yogi always looks for chances of realising identification with as many people as possible so that he can build into himself the experiences of various types of human beings A good actor does this very thing on the stage Unless an actor is able to achieve this identification (of course, artistically) he can never be a good actor and the greater the variety of characters the more is the power of identification with others developed, perhaps unconsciously

To the true dramatist, a character or an event has special significance which may escape the notice of ordinary people To him a particular character or an event represents thoughts in the Cosmic Mind and in trying to portray such characters and events he is in a way contacting the Divine Mind, and this is also in a way the aim of a Yogi The Yogi always looks for Divinity in everything and in every occurrence To him all that he experiences down here are only imperfect perhaps even distorted, expressions of thoughts in the mind of God, and he tries to get behind these imper

fect impressions to the Divine idea of which these are expressions In other words, a Yogi always looks for things and events not as they *seem* to be down here, but as they *are* really in the mind of God. The things in the mind of God were called by Plato Archetypes, i.e., abstract ideas in the Divine Mind which give rise to millions of concrete things and events down here A dramatist, if he is really an artist, does this very thing when he portrays great characters and events Through these characters and events the dramatist enables us to get glimpses of them as they exist in the mind of God. We may put it this way the characters and events in a great drama, though they may have a historical basis, really represent typical characters and typical events, as they are in the mind of the God all the time The Hamlet as portrayed by Shakespeare was not merely a prince of Denmark at a particular time in the world history, but he was a *typical* person who appears in the world at all times So also, Shakuntala was not merely a charming girl brought up by Sage Kanva Shakuntala of Kalidasa is a type of an innocent girl brought up in certain surroundings and then thrown into other surroundings There had been, there are and there will be many Hamlets, Othellos, Shakuntalas and Dushyantas in the world. Here we see how the dramatist falls into line with the Yogi

The basis of this world of manifestation is said to be the dual limitation of space and time. The object of Yogi is to transcend these limitations In the art of scenery painting there is a distinct suggestion of an attempt to get over the limitation of space. On a paper or a canvas of a few square inches area, the artist paints a scenery which in nature may extend over many square or cubic miles, and if the artist is really a master the effect of the painting will be as good as, if not better than, the effect of the natural scenery upon us What scenery painting is to space that drama is to time Events covering many years are presented

I may also refer to the aspect, common to Yoga and drama, of enabling us to go beyond pairs of opposites Both these have a faculty of synthesis which helps them to reconcile apparently opposite factors and getting a synthesis out of them One object of Yoga is to achieve such a synthesis, to realise unity in diversity, to realise a common basis behind pairs of opposites Drama enables us to achieve such a sort of synthesis of the opposites, joy and sorrow When we enjoy a tragedy we are unconsciously transmuting even sorrow into joy It is a common experience that when we witness a tragedy enacted by expert actors we put ourselves *en rapport* with the actors' experiences, the deep sorrows of the tragic character; we even experience the physical ractions, such as choking of the throat, eyes brimming with tears and so on. When again that tragedy is being enacted somewhere we yearn to witness it and again we go through all these experiences of sorrow in ourselves Is this not apparently a riddle? We do experience all those sorrows and want to re-experience them many times - Why? Because in that experience of sorrow we get an aesthetic happiness In other words we are able to squeeze out some joy out of that very sorrow This is possible because we experience these sorrows impersonally without getting entangled in them, and so it is possible by maintaining an impersonal attitude to synthesise even such opposites as joy and sorrow Aesthetic enjoyment of a tragedy is a striking example of this possibility and this is one aspect of Yoga.

Thus, we see that there are many elements common to Yoga and the dramatic art. It is no wonder that in India, Art was considered to be a Yoga

27. My Drama Reminiscences

A characteristic feature of the modern times is wild rush and hurry and consequently excitement. Living as we do in the midst of it, we may not realise it in full, but a

little detached view of what is happening around and a comparison of the same with the conditions that obtained about half a century ago will clearly show that a tremendous change has come about in the conditions of our life during these fifty years Things are moving fast and we want them to move faster still About 50 years ago, in my youth, people generally walked from place to place, then a bullock bandy was a luxury, horse carriage was used only by the aristocratic few, motor cars were not heard of except perhaps in cities Those were spacious times, life moved gently and smoothly and people generally lived contented lives I am not sure whether people of those times were not more happy than we with all the so-called modern "conveniences and gadgets" What changes have come about in our lives? When I think of those days and the present time, I have a nostalgic yearning to relive those days But that is evidently not possible now In every walk of life and in every human activity this tremendous change from simplicity and grace to complexity and excitement is noticeable

Being in a reminiscent mood I wish to call back to my mind memories of my early association with dramatic activity When I first appeared on the stage as Shakuntala in 1906, in the drama "Shakuntalam" put on boards by the Young Men's India Association of Lalgudi in Tiruchi District, we had very little stage equipment, very few make up requisites and practically no lighting facilities We generally chose a school hall for the play with a stage improvised at one end with a number of tables We used to borrow one or two curtains and a few side screens from some professional company or some people who used to hire out such things Lighting was provided by some powerful kerosene lamps—these were replaced by gas lights later—hung in front of the stage As for make-up we were blissfully ignorant of any ready-made things or paint sticks or eye brow pencil or spirit gum Cropped heads were rare in those

days and so for lady characters we were using what was called "half-tope", just some hair or chowri designed to cover the shaved portion—generally 3 to 4 inches broad—of the forehead, and for male characters there was little need even for such a simple contrivance For powdering the face we used the yellow powder (a compound of sulphur) then used by professionals (called "Antharam" in Tamil), some black smear supplied the moustache and hair near the temples Our homes supplied most of our dresses and jewels. In those days almost all of us (males and ladies) used to have our ear-holes bored for ear ornament, so there was not much difficulty in wearing an ear ring. Of course lady characters were represented by men on the stage — a lady acting on the stage along with men was unthinkable There was one snag however in regard to the royal robes of kings and princes It was the custom (or fashion) then for royalties to wear what was called "jimki-suit", velvet suit embroidered with glittering pieces of tiny glass tubes This tinsel will shine and glitter in the light and dazzle the onlookers Naturally such a dress will be heavy to wear, but we did not mind—why, in fact we did not mind many other things as well

Orchestra was provided generally by a harmonist who will himself sing and a drummer, both placed on one side of the stage, behind the side screen and hence invisible to the audience. Later on, it became the fashion to have the harmonist on the stage itself at one end so that he was in full view of the audience all the time. What I am saying here about the amateur theatricals is more or less applicable to the professional stage of those days as well Orchestra in the pit in front of the stage, foot-lights and such other improvements came in later From what I have said our amateur theatre might appear rather crude, well, whatever deficiency there might have been was made up by the enthusiasm and whole-heartedness of our members Within a few

years we effected great improvement in our equip... Some of our members got into touch with some ... organisation at *Madras* and others with some of the pr... fessionals in the art. We introduced wigs (half and f... grease paints, eye-brow pencil, nose paste, spirit gum, ... hair, etc We also improved our stage arrangements but ... harmonist still continued to sit on the stage in full ... of the audience.

As for music, we had plenty of it, the professional st... was more or less our standard and music was used in ple... in and out of season. There used to be what were ... called the 'entrance song' and 'exit song' for almost ev... important character, and on the professional stage of th... times, singing characters, whatever be their proper p... tion on the stage used to go near the harmonist whene... they had to sing Some characters like Narada used t... indulge even in swaras and other musical acrobatics ... the professional stage Even in recent times, in one of ... talkies we had Narada and Krishna taking turns in sin... *swaras* for a classical composition But we tried to ste... clear of several of these defects, still we used to have ple... of music

It was in connection with the work of composing so... for the various characters that I first discovered my ow... ability—though quite rudimentary at the time—to comp... music Practically I had to compose the songs for all t... characters

In those days we used to act Indian plays in Engl... (Sir William Jone's *Shakuntalam*, Vasudea Rao's *Chandrah...sa* and so on) and also occasionally Tamil plays By that ti... thanks to P Sambanda Mudaliar, Suryanarayana Sastri and... other pioneers, we had a number of plays written in Ta... for the stage The pioneering work of P Sambanda Mudali... in this direction can never be over estimated

When I went to Travancore early in 1910 I was naturally on the look-out for amateur organisations interested in Tamil plays There were one or two organisations occasionally putting on the boards some Malayalam plays Though many Tamil professional troupes visited Trivandrum and were much patronged by the public and Royalty and though there were local organisations consisting mainly of Tamil speaking people, there was not one society interested in Tamil dramas One of these associations of mainly Tamilians used to enact one play in English every year at the time of the Maharajah's birthday Generally it was an Indian play written in English This was their only dramatic activity for the year I found however that they had plenty of talent which could be harnessed for sustained high class dramatic activity When I suggested to them the idea of acting Indian dramas in Tamil periodically they were simply thunderstruck. "What? An amateur to act in a Tamil play! Unthinkable. No decent educated man will "stoop" to act in Tamil, that is only for the professional people, we can never dream of appearing on the stage and speaking in Tamil" That is what I was told I explained to them that in other parts of South India there were societies of "decent educated" people who were doing it and were being encouraged and patronised by the "educated" public also I told them also about my own activities in that line. But no! they would not countenance the idea It was not that they personally disapproved of the idea but they were afraid that the public would not approve of it and would look down upon the actors if they acted in Tamil Then I gave them a short account of the activities of the Lalgudi Y M I A.—it may be incidentally stated that this Y M.I.A was started 8 years before the Madras Y M.I.A was started by Dr Annie Besant. One of the prominent members of the Trivandrum organisation then suggested, "If perhaps some amateur organisation from outside Travancore consisting of 'decent educated' persons come here and enact

plays in Tamil, it is quite possible that this prejudice on the part of the public could be removed and then the way will be open for us amateurs to act Tamil plays" I offered to bring the Lalgudi Y M I A. troupe to Trivandrum and have a series of plays enacted. Accordingly I arranged for the Lalgudi troupe to visit Trivandrum next year and act three plays We had vakils, doctors, professors, headmasters and such "decent, educated" people among our troupe. I was able to get the patronage of H H Sri Mulam Tirunal Maharaja The Dewan, Sir P Rajagopalachari, greatly helped me too Also we had good dignified and intellectual audiences The venture was a great success When the people saw professors, judges, doctors and advocates acting Tamil plays the old prejudice died instant death and they began to ask for Tamil plays Thus was initiated in Trivandrum amateur Tamil dramatic activity I shall pass over the early stages I even now remember what a great surprise it was to the friends there when I introduced "improved ways" of make-up in the shape of paint sticks, spirit gum, full wigs and so on

The audience see the drama on the stage in front of the curtain but for us the real drama is behind the curtain, on the stage and in the green room Compared to this drama "behind the scenes" the drama witnessed in front of the curtain fades into dull insignificance I can recall a number of such dramatic happenings behind I have already referred to the "jimki suit" decorated with tinsel glass tubes One of our members who was dressed for a prince's part (naturally in such a suit) was accustomed to using snuff and after drawing in a pinch of snuff it was his habit to wipe off the scattered particles of the snuff by just rubbing the left forearm across the nose When he was about to enter the stage he had his pinch of snuff—perhaps to put him in the proper mood—and by sheer force of habit he ran his left arm across his nose Unfortunately the tips of

some of the glass tubes of his dress came into rather violent contact with the nose and tore away some flesh from it and blood began to spurt out in plenty One can easily imagine the subsequent commotion, some of us in perhaps lighter vein positively enjoyed the discomfiture of the "prince". His nose was duly attended to and we could not avoid some delay

On another occasion a friend was acting the part of Siva, our green room Director was saying that snake ear ornament was a necessary requisite for that part But that actor, strangely enough, had no holes in his ear-lobes The Director however assured him that the matter could be managed somehow with some spring arrangement So the actor got dressed up and there was nothing more to be done except putting on the snake ear ring Our green room Director was a sport; he had the snake ornament ready and under the pretext of fixing it up with a spring he actually pierced the ear lobe with a thin wire sharpened at end for that very purpose The actor's reaction may easily be visualised he gave a wild shriek and jumped But we all laughed, the green room expert had whispered a hint to us as to what he had in his mind The actor was infuriated, but what to do? He could not undo what had been done, and he could not appear on the stage with the ornament only on one ear, so he had to submit himself to the other ear-lobe also being pierced Thus his ear-boring ceremony was performed that day

I remember vividly another occasion of a distinctly dramatic character We were enacting Chandrahasa, and in the last scene Madana, son of Dushtabuddhi, is killed by mistake, and round his corpse spooks and ghosts gather and dance with joy as they had a human corpse to feast themselves upon Now, our stage was put up with a number of school room tables Though carefully chosen and arranged these tables had small interspaces between them The friend

who acted Madana's part fell down as a corpse. Unfortunately a bit of flesh of his thigh got caught up in one of these interspaces, he was a corpse and so could not move In the meantime the ghosts and spooks started dancing around, when they danced the tables began to move to and fro alongside with the result that the strip of flesh caught between the tables was subjected to sideways pressure and got squeezed between the tables The friend however was true to his part and with remarkable patience endured all that agony till the curtain fell Then he had his revenge and gave a good chiding to the ghosts We had a hearty laugh in which he also joined

Such incidents were the spice of our amateur dramatic activity

28 The Art of Kathakalakshepam (Sankirtana)

Kathakalakshepams and Bhajanas are two of the most important institutions in India meant to keep alive the religious and ethical instinct in the life of the people in general Till a few decades ago there was practically no village or street in which there were not some regular bhajanas going on, and all the people used to take part in them as well Purana-patanam, the earlier form of Kathakalakshepam of the present day, was similarly a regular feature of the daily life of the community Kathakalakshepam in the present form came to the south from the Mahratta countries and was shaped into a distinctive institution by the famous Krishna Bhagavathar of Tanjore and later by Tiruppayanam Panchapagesa Sastriar, in their hand it became a unique art, in which various elements of the other fine arts such as music, dance, drama were combined to produce a striking effect This used to be very popular too in fact more popular than music concerts Several musicians of repute changed over to Kalakshepams on this account, as for example, Palghat Anantarama Bhagavatar

Muthia Bhagavatar and Vedanta Bhagavatar Due to this popularity several "Bhagavatars" began to enter this field, whether they were competent to do it or not. As used to be remarked then, these novices converted the Katha into a "standing kacchery"—concert of standing musicians!

The chief object of Katha is usually to impart religious instruction, including of course, any kind of moral teaching But it is not merely that. It is very much more If I may put it, it is a didactic Art in the sense that it is an Art used for didactic purposes In drama also there is this didactic element. But Katha can be Art and may be made an Art. After all, Katha is only monodrama In it we have all the elements which go to make a good drama Even without music Katha can be made to assume an artistic value by properly handling the theme and working it out on the basic principles underlying dramatic Art. Here again, music is of great value and certainly goes a very long way to make the Katha effective not only as story telling but also as a great Art. In this aspect of Kathakalakshepam music plays a very important part, and hence one cannot be too careful in fitting music into Kathakalakshepam Being a monodrama, the Kathakalakshepam worked on the basis of Art presents great difficulties which are easily got over on the stage. On the stage we depend for effect upon not only the capacity of the actor, but on several elements which go to make the complete whole We have the different characters, dressed and made up to look as nearly as possible the personages they represent, there is the stage setting, the scenery, the colour scheme, all of which tend to produce the dramatic illusion into which the audience fall This makes the work of the actor easy and helps him to a large extent in producing the required effect. But in the case of Kathakalakshepam the performer has none of these conveniences on hand He has to depend upon himself and his resourcefulness Here lies the real difficulty in perform-

ing a Kathakalakshepam as a piece of Art. The performer has to be an actor and an actor of no mean parts He has to act not only one part but several parts, and he has to do this without any dress or make-up or back-ground or other stage settings But still a good performer should be able to produce the necessary dramatic effect if he pays attention tos ome of the essential points which have to be borne in mind in this connection.

Let me here enumerate some of these points which I have found very useful myself.

(1) When we choose a story for the Kathakalakshepam, be it Puranic or not, it has to be carefully worked in different stages as in a drama. I generally work it out in a number of scenes, choosing the essential situation in each scene and working up the part of the story pertaining to that scene to the climax. Shortening or lengthening will only depend upon hurrying through or dropping or elaborating some of these scenes Of course, there will be some scenes on which the whole story stands and we cannot afford to touch them In introducing different parts of the story and presenting them as scenes to the audience great care should be taken to give an effective description of the particular scene, something like a word picture, so that the audience, though they are not in front of a stage with all the necessary setting, feel almost as if they are witnessing that scene.

(2) Except where the description of the kind referred to above is involved, it is desirable to avoid indirect form of narration as far as possible I have very often seen some effective story telling being spoiled by the indirect narration adopted by the performer If you act the different persons who are coming in a particular situation properly, you can avoid to a very large extent the need for indirect narration

(3) Again, as in the case of the drama, the musical element must be very carefully chosen. Being a monodrama

Kathakalakshepam requires that every song introduced into it must be carefully introduced, tunes and talas being properly chosen As Kathakalakshepam is not a musical concert (though several performers are trying to convert Kathakalakshepams into concerts of an extremely technical nature) care should be taken to avoid unnecessary technical pieces which involve a high degree of musical proficiency and which in a Kathakalakshepam are likely to mar the total effect. Elaborate Ragalapana, singing swaras, introducing too many standard kirtanas in and out of season, giving too many occasions for the display of the drummer's skill, all these have to be avoided if Kathakalakshepam is to be a work of Art.

Also every song must be carefully worked into the narration It should not appear to be an interpolation It must be so worked that the audience do not feel where the prose ends and the music begins Very often musical pieces are introduced after a sudden stop and the narration begins again after some interval after the music is over This takes away much of the effect Of course, I am not a puritan to advocate the total abolition of extraneous music from the Katha Where there is a natural break in the development of the story we may certainly have extraneous musical pieces even of a technical nature with swaras and mridangam display and all that But it is not an essential part of the Katha It is only something like an interlude in a drama —something like a "curtain raiser"

Another point to note in this connection is to avoid as far as possible having to expound the meaning of the musical pieces sung, except where the language of the piece is different from the vernacular of the major portion of the audience By properly mouthing the words of the song accompanied by the necessary gestures one can convey easily the meaning of the piece to the audience. As a rule, except where the words are abstruse songs in local verna-

culars ought to be left without any commentary or annotation This again involves care in introducing songs.

(4) The use of proper gestures by the performer is a matter of a very great importance. Katha being a monodrama, it is essential that the performer should carefully choose his gestures in dealing with the various personages of the story The gestures ought to be suggestive, graceful and natural Necessity for narration, for expounding musical pieces and such other things can be very easily avoided and the effect enhanced considerably by the use of gestures. The Katha performer has perforce to be an actor of parts.

(5) The accompaniments must be absolutely secondary I am one of those who think that even in a musical concert the accompaniments should not be allowed to usurp places not meant for them In a Kathakalakshepam the reasons are all the greater Music on the whole is only a handmaid to the monodrama If the accompaniments of the musical part of the Katha are allowed to dominate, the effect will be anything but artistic. In some situations it may be even necessary to disregard the accompaniments altogether In some pathetic or very quick moving situations the performer may have to get on without any regard to the accompaniments This is a point which needs very careful consideration at the hands of performers who wish to make the Kathakalakshepam a real Art.

(6) To make the Art side of the Katha prominent it is also necessary to see that too many long sermons on ethical principles should be avoided. Even where the story brims with situations convenient for such appeals they must be made very dramatically and not become sermons or lectures The obvious moral lessons will easily go home to the people even without the performer's sermonising upon them, if he had worked the story carefully and effectively At times, the point goes home to the audience more effectively unsaid than by a long detailed peroration from the

performer Where it is possible, even this moral may be left to some of the characters to bring out.

(7) One aspect which has to be kept in mind, but which is usually forgotten nowadays, is that the music of the Katha is of a distinctive character, it has its own "Melam", unique to the institution The tunes best fitted for a Katha are of the type used in Maharatta countries—Śaki, Dindi, Anjanagita, Savai, Ghanakshari and so on These are simple, crisp and effective tunes Jalar, Kulitalam (with its own sweet tinkling sound) and chapla are essential to produce the proper atmosphere It is essential to maintain this Katha "atmosphere" throughout Also in doing the talam, time is not measured as in a concert by beats and pauses Generally Desadi and Ushitalam are used Very often 7-beat talams (ezhadi talam, as it is called) are also employed The effect of these is tremendous, as anyone who has heard will realise Of course, it requires some training to use these talas with ease and skill In my own view, no one can take to Katha performing who is not used to these tala varieties which make the very life of the institution Also there are some typical moharas or muthyppus in mridangam which are characteristic of the Katha-melam It is very unfortunate that these are going out of use nowadays The All India Radio is to some extent responsible for these specialities getting out of use, in their studios there do not seem to be available accompanists who can provide these features distinctive to the Katha music

The Kathakalakshepam item in the All India Radio is becoming almost a farce, it is not a concert which you can cut short as you like, it is an organic whole, several parts of it are woven into a set pattern But for this the story telling will become an insipid, flat affair One cannot work out the whole without building up the various parts so as to fit them in the general structure. Generally speaking, to perform a Katha in 45 minutes is converting it into

a ritual or formality to be gone through just to fill the time This elementary point seems to have been ignored by the All India Radio

I have tried to throw out some of the ideas which came to my mind in thinking about this subject. Katha kalakshepam has appealed to me more as an Art than as mere story telling Of course devotion has to be given a prominent place One finds it easier at times to produce a devotional atmosphere through music than by mere story telling and dramatic presentation proves also very helpful in adding to the devotional aspect I feel that this aspect of the Katha requires a little more attention at the hands of the performers than is given to it at present.

Kathakalakshepam is a glorious institution in the cultural life of India meant to keep alive the soul of the nation Once it was a very popular institution Most unfortunately its popularity has declined of late, this is not a healthy sign Our greatness lies in our special culture and not in spurious imitations And this institution was a very powerful factor in our cultural life True patriotism and reverence for our ancient culture require that this art should not be allowed to decline or degenerate into a mere money-making affair While our Music Sabhas go in for all kinds of shows of doubtful usefulness they do not seem to give sufficient encouragement to this art. If there is proper demand there will be adequate supply also Let me hope that our Sabhas will become more alive to their responsibility in this matter

29 The Place of Art in Education

The true object of education is to develop human personality in all its aspects Any over-emphasis on a particular aspect to the neglect of another may lead to a kind of lop sided development which in the long run may do more harm than good There was a time in our educational history when emphasis was laid only upon the intellectual develop-

ment of the student. In those days there was very little attention paid even to physical development. Latterly they began to consider the importance of physical instruction so much so that one's proficiency in sports was given great weight in selecting candidates for certain appointments But man is not merely his intellect and his physical body He is very much more. He is a composite being whose real existence is far above and deeper than the merely physical and mental aspects He has his emotions which play a more vital part in his development and the development of his nation than is ordinarily recognised It is often said that we are mostly led by our sentiments and our intellect comes in only to supply valid reasons for what we decide to do in response to the promptings of our sentiments Over and above all this, man is an immortal soul whose progress all the other factors of his existence serve to help

Unfortunately the development of human emotions has not received that attention which is due to it in our educational institutions In one sense it may be said that the present dead-lock in world affairs is to a large extent due to the lop-sided development of human personality referred to above All emphasis was laid on head development while the heart of humanity was allowed to starve It is this over-development of the head at the expense of the heart that has gone a long way to supply the psychological basis for our modern troubles If there had been a balanced progress of the head and the heart, human nature would have developed certain fundamental moral values which would have made it impossible for the present world muddle to have come about. It is, therefore, necessary that the heart development of the pupil should receive very great attention at the hands of the educationalists. I am reminded in this connection of a great Chinese proverb which says, "If you have two loaves. sell one and buy a lily" The impli-

that object or event is an expression, however faint, and so the objective world has a new meaning for him, reveals more to him than to the ordinary man He is thus enabled to think in terms of types (archetypes, as Plato called them) in the mind of God This helps him to achieve a synthesis which the analytical methods of intellectual science will rarely help him to achieve A type in the mind of God is revealed down here in myriads of forms representing that type, multiplicity below and unity above — this is what the artist is enabled to feel and realise This is best seen especially in portrait-painting where the portrait (painted by a real artist) does not only represent the person as he appeared to be at the moment he was observed but the person as he generally is (which means his general character and temperament) and what that person is in the mind of God.

Art refines our nature and creates an instinctive sense of fitness of things It helps discipline without any formal rules of discipline I may mention here an experiment tried by Madame Montessori in one of her schools in Milan This is what she says "I had tried to have a Directress of 'Children's House' in Milan who is a gifted musician make a number of trials and experiments ... She was greatly surprised to discover the effect of such music . . . She now noticed that as she multiplied and repeated the rhythm exercises the children little by little left off their ugly jumping, until finally it was a thing of the past. The Directress one day asked for an explanation for this change of conduct . . . The older children gave various replies, whose meaning was the same

'It is not nice to jump',

'Jumping is ugly',

'It is rude to jump'

This was certainly a beautiful triumph for our method."

Many problems of discipline might be solved to some extent by introducing art training as part of the educational curriculum. I am reminded of what the late Sir C R. Reddi said in inaugurating one of the Music Conferences in Travancore At that time some Indian politicians were going to attend some War Council meeting in London Mr Reddi said that if instead of sending politicians they would send some top-ranking musicians and if the War Council proceedings started with their music, there would in all probability be no war at all A great change takes place in human nature in a mysterious manner through art education Of course, I do not mean that in our schools we should train professional musicians and artists any more than we train professionals in other walks of human life. We are here to open up the hidden faculties in a human being and give full play to good ones and transmute the undesirable ones into desirable ones A man of heart, despite his numerous failings and lapses will one day become a saint. But a man who is intellectually arrogant may not be able to achieve this In our institutions we should provide facilities for unfolding the aesthetic nature in the young ones entrusted to our care They should develop art sensibility, power to appreciate art and beauty — or to put it in short, become a cultured citizen

30 Some Languishing Arts of India

(a) KATHAKALAKSHEPAM

The essential basis of Indian Culture is Religion in the widest and most general sense of the word An intuitive conviction that the Divine is immanent in everything permeated every phase of our life Religion in some form or other played a part in every activity In olden times temples were not only places of worship but were also centres of various human activities—artistic, social, political and so on Temples inspired sculpture, architecture, music and poetry

panchayat courts usually met in temples, even shops were usually situated in and around the temples Therefore our leaders founded many institutions to keep alive the religious spirit in the minds of the people Among these the *Bhajanas* and the *Kathakalakshepams* (in their earlier form as *Puranapatanam*) were prominent. There was practically no village without a *Bhajanamatham*, and day in and day out there were *Bhajanas* and *Kalakshepams* reminding the people all the time about the higher and more lasting things in life.

The modern *Kathakalakshepam* was an evolution of the old *Puranapatanam* as a result of the impact of the *Sankirtan* from the Maharashtra country It was shaped as a definite art form by Tanjore Krishna Bhagavatar of hallowed memory Tiruppayanam Panchapagesa Sastriar gave his own distinctive touch to it and made it a synthesis of *Wisdom* and *Art* We are supposed to follow this pattern since

It became very popular and thousands used to gather to listen to *Kathas* They kept alive the religio-moral as well as the aesthetic instincts in the people. It was more in demand than even music, so much so that prominent concert musicians like Palghat Anantarama Bhagavatar, Harikesanallur Muthia Bhagavatar and Kallidaikurichi Vedanta Bhagavatar took to performing *kathas* in preference to giving concerts During the last two decades or so, however, a change — subtle and therefore more dangerous — seems to have come in the general outlook, taste and sense of values of our people I do not propose to stress this point further We find the effect of this subtle change in almost every phase of our national life The old instinctive sense of right and wrong, of good and bad, based on our basic culture, is slowly deteriorating In reality this is the greatest danger to our national life The late Dr J H. Cousins once remarked that a nation without its own distinctive culture awaits its transport to the burning ghat. I feel that his is

not an overstatement, it is literally true. The soul of a nation finds expression in her culture which in turn seeks expression in her arts

Now where is the old status enjoyed by the *Katha* and why is it languishing now? There are perhaps one or two persons who still keep to the old style and purpose of the *katha*. But generally a modern *katha* is a parrot-like repetition of a hotch-potch of indifferent music and low-class humour Why this unfortunate situation? It may be argued that the right type of people competent to give a really good and effective *katha* performance is not available. This may be true. But the real cause is that the situation is working in a vicious circle. In every human activity there is the inevitable relation between the supply and the demand. If people really demand a good *katha* then good *katha* performances will be in the supply The general vitiation in the taste and the religio-moral sense is the root cause. The effect of this vitiation can be seen in several other phases of national life too

The position to which this noble institution has been relegated can be realized from the place accorded to it in our Radio programmes To a music concert they allot 90 minutes while only 60 minutes are given for a *katha* A concert can be adjusted to any duration by adding or omitting a few songs But a *katha* is a theme developed as an organic whole, situations have to be dramatically worked up and it requires time to accomplish this with the aid of narration and appropriate music It stands to reason that generally more time should be given for *kathas* than for mere concerts But most of the *Katha* items in the Radio programme are tending to become a matter of formality and they are rarely well balanced and effective *Kathakalakshepam* is a composite art combining as it does the elements of the drama, dance music and story telling In the interests of the preservation of our distinctive national trad

tional culture this institution has to be restored to its rightful place.

I do not wish to go further into details in the matter of this restoration I shall simply mention one point. The music for the *katha* has its own special features, it should not become a concert, the tunes of songs, the way in which *talam* (cymbals) is handled—*yezhadi* and *usi talams* as they are called—and the short *moharas* (winding up) on *mridangam*, all these give to the *katha* a distinctive atmosphere.

(b) BOMMALATTAM (PUPPET-DRAMA)

I remember how in my younger days I used to sit out whole nights witnessing *Bommalattam*, thoroughly lost in the aesthetic enjoyment of the show, at times weeping with the characters and at other times bursting into boisterous laughter at some of the humorous situations The stage set-up was quite simple, a small cadjan roofed shed right in the middle of a street or lane, a platform about 5 feet high, partitioned across by a black curtain about four feet in height. The puppets will do their parts in front of this curtain handled suitably by persons from behind it. It requires great skill and experience to manipulate the puppets with the aid of black strings and in some cases thin iron rods As a lad, I have seen these puppets, their dresses and the manipulating strings during day time, a troupe of players were camping next to my house in Srirangam and they were kind enough to explain the secrets of their job to my great surprise and admiration It is a wonderful art But we rarely hear of such shows now Pity of pities

(c) TALA DISPLAY

Here I would also like to refer to another art (a very minor art) which has almost disappeared We have now for a music concert *tala* accompaniments like *Mridangam, Kanjira, Ghatam, Moorsing* (Jews harp) and so on These

are given independent chances for display We used to have small cymbals as an accompaniment, specially in *Bhajanas*; and they were given independent chance for display like *mridangam* and *kanjira* I have seen experts handling the cymbals with striking dexterity and working out complicated rhythm patterns with them to the wonder and delight of the audience This has disappeared almost completely This is a lamentable loss

(d) KOLAM (RANGOLI)

Another minor art which is languishing is the minor domestic art called *kolam* in the south, *alpona* in Bengal, *Rangoli* in other parts of north India and referred to in ancient books as *Rangavalli* or *Shaktichitra* or *Dhoolichitra*. Though a minor matter, it was a potent factor in keeping alive the artistic instinct and sensibility in our girls and ladies I have seen young girls competing with ont another in making new designs I may confess that in my younger days I was much fascinated with this art, and I used to work out designs and actually draw the Kolam in my house. On the days of temple festivals when the Deity Sri Ranga natha used to be taken in procession along the streets ladies used to draw kolam designs in the streets in front of their houses And I used to monopolise all the available spaces in front of my house and fill the whole space with designs including the figure of the vahana (lion or horse or elephant or swan as the case may be) of the Deity on that particular day, much to the surprise, tingled perhaps with touches of admiration and envy, of the ladies and girls in the neigh bouring houses Unfortunatelv this seems to be going out of fashion Even in villages this tends to become a mere formality I know there are books on sale professedly giving various designs for kolam, but they are in the first place many of them not artistic and secondly they only add to the already increasing tendency to laziness and mere imita-

tion at the expense of creative art impulse inherent in every Indian woman

(e) NAVARATRI KOLU

Before concluding I wish to refer to another institution which is gradually receding from the original artistic motive which played an important idea in the festivities I mean the *Navaratri* festival. In our country, in all our festivals festival In our country, in all our festivals and other institutions art, like religion, played an important part. This is but natural, as in our culture religion and art went hand in hand In a sense we may say that religion turned outwards is art and art turned inwards is religion, religion leads us to the God within and art reveals God in Nature I have felt always that Navaratri is an occasion when the art instinct in our ladies may be given full play There may be dolls and pictures, but arranging things with a view to beauty, planning ways to accentuate the beauty of line, form, colour and so on was the real purpose, at least one of the purposes of a Navaratri show I had always advocated that as far as possible the things arranged in the *Kolumandapam* should be things made by ourselves or made under our direction and according to designs supplied by us In my house I used to lav great insistence on this and gradually the *Kolumandapam* developed into some sort of art exhibition In course of time most of the articles exhibited turned out to be home-made things Somehow to me the *Kolu* suggested primarily an art exhibition and Navaratri was a great occasion for the display of natural artistic talents in our ladies Unfortunately, of late, while the festival has become a big show there is very little to give the right tone to it and remind us of our great national culture All kinds of dolls and other things which are un-Indian in both form and idea are arranged under the glare of multi-coloured electric lights, the whole show is lurid,

flashy, fantastic and at times disturbing to our sense of fitness and proper atmosphere. I wish a few of us take this matter up seriously and make Navaratri an occasion for the art instinct in our ladies to find expression along right lines and create the true Indian atmosphere of Truth, Holiness and Beauty—*Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram.*

Part III

GENERAL

31 The Nature and Function of Intuition

To understand the real function of intuition *vijnan* we must know the constitution of man Man has his purely physical nature and with it the vitality principle. Then he has his desires and the concrete mind Beyond these there is the abstract mind or, as it is called, the formless Manas Beyond this again there are the Buddhi and the Spirit of man, and so on Intuition really begins where the sphere of operation of the concrete mind ceases In this age when the lower mind dominates all our activities it is quite natural that the function of intuition is not properly recognized.

The function of intuition is so much at variance with that of the concrete mind that it is almost difficult for an ordinary intellectual man to value intuition at its proper worth. Intuition is something like a sudden illumination, it floods all the aspects of man and gives a perception remarkable in its width and depth. To illustrate the difference between the function of the mind and that of intuition, let us consider how the mind works The process employed by the mind is essentially analytical while intuition is fundamentally synthetic. The mind perceives through various senses the outer phenomena, collects them, tabulates them, arranges them, and from all these data, draws inferences, and these inferences are stated as scientific laws Obviously, no scientific law can be absolute Truth A law may hold good for a long time, but if a new phenomenon turns up which disobeys the law, the law has to be so altered as to explain the new phenomenon also That has been the way of all scientific advancement. But intuition works in a different way In some mysterious way in which

imagination plays an important part, it gets at the truth in a flash without having to go through all the intermediary stages incidental to analysis Suppose I am led into a dark room and asked to prepare a list of all the articles in that room Being in the dark I cannot see anything in that room, but I shall grope my way about, contact with my senses the various objects, and laboriously make out a catalogue of all the articles in that room. Still there is a possibility of my catalogue being defective or even erroneous But suppose that I have an electric torch in my hand, and I switch it on. Then the whole room is visible to my gaze and I have only to perceive what all there is in the room without moving or groping about. This more or less illustrates the essential difference between mind and intuition Intuition is something like the electric torch. If one is able to use it one knows things by a sudden illumination rather than by laborious mental processes

Intuition may be said to be of two kinds Now, I was speaking of the abstract mind beyond the concrete mind The peculiar feature of the abstract mind is that it does not deal so much with forms as the concepts which are clothed in various forms While there may be thousands of chairs in the world, the idea of the chair, *i e*, the abstract chair, is only one You may draw millions of triangles but the quality of the triangle or that which makes a triangle what it is, the idea behind all these various triangles, is only one In other words, the abstract mind *deals in types* out of which numberless forms are built in the concrete mind It follows from this that the abstract mind is in one sense a synthesizing agent getting at the one idea behind various forms which clothe the idea. Intuition, at times, comes from the region of this abstract mind While we are struggling here with various forms without being able to get at the common type behind, intuition may flash down and give us the idea It is the play of such an

intuition that enabled great men of the world to formulate laws or possible hypotheses which would cover a multitude of phenomena. The law of gravitation as enunciated by Newton was an act of such intuition And again it is the play of this intuition that led to the enunciation of the famous principle of Archimedes.

Then there is a higher intuition which originates from even a higher level, the level of Buddhi, that is, the principle in man which unites the various apparently disorganized and disunited elements down here. The essence of this Buddhi is union A person dominated by the play of Buddhi is one who always seeks unity and similarity even behind apparently irreconcilable elements Now this faculty, when it functions, goes to the very root of things automatically, and views everything from that supreme standpoint of unity Intuition playing from this region enables a man to put himself *en rapport* with every one and every thing in this universe. Thus he gets at the root of things and perceives everything in its true relationship, and so he is able to see things as they actually *are* and not as they *seem* A person who is dominated by the activity of this Buddhi aspect is naturally a highly evolved soul He lives and rules his personality from a centre which is not reached by ordinary mortals To him everything seems to be like an open page Apparently discordant things reveal a harmony to his eyes Apparently insoluble problems seem quite easy of solution

Though at present the faculty of intuition is not so normal as the faculty of mind, a time will come when the average man will have this intuition at work in him more frequently Man is always evolving From a piece of granite to a tree is a far cry From a tree to an animal is a further cry From animal to man is a still further cry But the human Soul has evolved through all these stages in course of time, taking perhaps millions and millons of

years to pass from one step to another Now we have reached almost the culmination of our mental development The next step, as even the most advanced scientists say at present, is to develop a new faculty which will interpret the phenomena of this world in a new way, and that faculty is intuition Already in cultured men and women this faculty is dawning One may almost say that one of the essentials of a cultured human being is this faculty of intuition functioning in him at least to some extent.

When this faculty of intuition functions, its force seems to be almost irresistible You dare not disobey its mandate. You feel so sure about it. You do not feel inclined to stop and question But there is one danger in this matter Very many people are merely dominated by impulse and may mistake this impulse for intuition Some impulsive people do not stop to think They feel so sure of their position. They go headlong into what their impulse dictates them to do Bishop Leadbeater has suggested one or two methods by which we can distinguish impulse from intuition. In the case of impulse you will generally find something in the nature of a personal gratification involved, while intuition is essentially impersonal. Then in the case of impulse, if you fail to heed it there is generally a reaction of resentment. In the case of intuition it is not so A third remarkable difference is that in the case of impulse, if you keep quiet for some time, it loses strength and gradually wears away But intuition is insistent and does not lose strength by lapse of time

One may ask how to develop intuition. Of course, it will come in due course to every one But if we want to quicken its growth we may do it in one or two ways First, by getting into the habit of thinking more abstractly, more universally, and more in terms of types, we may develop this faculty In fact, in all meditation, part of our

thought is directed towards this habit of abstracting our attention from the concrete world of forms into the abstract world of ideas.

Another method of rousing this faculty of intuition is through Art. Great artists are highly intuitive. In great works of art one always finds this faculty of intuition standing out. A work of real art sums up varieties of human experiences and generalizes them for us Whether it is a portrait or a piece of sculpture or a line of poetry this quality of generalization will be evident. When a great artist paints the portrait of a person he not only paints that particular person but in some mysterious way he gets at the type to which that person belongs and represents that type also in his portrait. That is where a good portrait differs from a photographic reproduction While the latter gives us the physical appearance of a person at a particular time, the portrait of the same person drawn by a great artist represents the real man that he is, not only what he is at a particular moment but what he has been and he is and perhaps will be in the future The greatest dramas of the world are attempts at portraying human experiences in a generalized impersonal way Through art one will be able to achieve in a very short time, in a sort of vicarious way, what ordinarily will take years and years to achieve in the ordinary course. Therefore those who work along the line of art will inevitably develop this faculty of sensing the type behind the forms, getting at the root of things, and generalizing particular human experiences into universal experiences To them persons and things will appear to be much fuller and much more significant than to the ordinary individual.

Then another and perhaps a surer method is to develop the habit of perceiving similarity and unity in apparently contradictory and diverse things This is best achieved through Love and its various phases, such as friendship,

sympathy and so on When a person is habitually of a loving nature he will naturally work more towards unity than towards diversity Love enables one to transcend barriers, to seek contacts in all possible ways, and to put oneself *en rapport* with other people Through this process Buddhi is developed and therefore the higher intuition. If we develop our Buddhi and make the mind a willing and efficient tool in its hands it will be found that the quality of intuition is rapidly developed in us.

32 Some Thoughts on Mahabharata

The Mahabharata is undoubtedly one of the greatest works of the world, unique in many ways—unique for the deepest philosophic truths, for the wide range of human life covered by the ethics and for the high spiritual sti mulus provided in this epic. It is sometimes called the *fifth Veda* Vedas are said to be Divine Revelations The Mahabharata though not technically a revelation, is more than a revelation in the nature of its contents For one thing it contains the greatest sipirtual treasure ever known to the world, the BHAGAVAD GITA, which may be rightly called the scripture of the world This alone will suffice to make the epic the greatest work of the world

Apparently it is the story of a war between two rival sections of a dynasty, but it is very much more It is the story of evolution of all life, it is a treatise on cosmogony, a code of universal ethics, it is also a history of the human race in its most general sense All life is rooted in the One Life, the Devas, Rishis, men, beasts, flowers, rocks, why, everything in this manifested universe are all evolved from this One Life and finally go back to and get merged in that One Life There is a Great Plan in the mind of God (Ishwara Sankalpa) and everything that was, that is and that shall be, happens in accordance with that Plan

Human free will is part of that Plan How the inviolability of the Divine Plan and the free will of man can be reconciled is a metaphysical problem whose solution may evade the limited intellect of man But it is there, spiritual intuition alone can solve such problems The Divine Plan works itself out under the great Law of Karma to which everything in manifestation conforms Millions of souls are in manifestation and their karmic interactions make an exceedingly complicated karmic pattern But there are Agencies in the Plan who see to it that all such interactions are balanced, all karmic debts repaid and all karmic bonds dissolved ultimately It is an interesting study to watch how this balancing of complex karmic debts is worked out in this epic Down here we see inexplicable happenings but their root causes are to be found in the remote past. When one takes what may be called the cosmic view point we shall find that everything falls in its own place and every occurrence has a profound significance

Let me now consider a few specifis points coming out of this great epic. In the first place we get a glimpse of the immense wealth and the great prosperity of ancient India When we compare that prosperity and wealth with the present-day condition our hearts will bleed at the tragic degeneration to which we have reduced ourselves Again consider the all-round education which prevailed in those times We are now tinkering with our educational schemes, we adopt one scheme and before we have had time to work it out fully and reap its benefits, some faddist brings in another scheme and that is adopted The result is that the poor youth on whom these varying experiments are performed—suffers We deplore that the products of the modern education are poor stuff Well, it may be so, but who is responsible for it? Certainly not the poor youth In those days the princes learnt not only literature, statecraft and military science but also the fine arts Technical

education without humanities will make one soul-less A man is not merely his brain or stomach, there is his heart, he has his emotions which play a more important part in his life as a *man* than mere brawn and brain. So we find Arjuna is not only a great warrior, a superb archer' but an expert in music and dance This comes in handy to him when he enters service in Virata's court as Vrihannala and teaches these arts to the princess there

This epic brings out very forcibly the great truth of the relativity of ethics *Dharma* has two aspects. One of these is *Sanatanadharma* which means the Eternal Law This holds good for all time and for all the Universe, it is the basic Law of Manifestation. But what is generally meant by *Dharma* is only the application of the Eternal Law to human life The Eternal Dharma is unchanging but the application varies with individuals, their avocations, their stages in evolution, the particular epoch in which they live, their races, their nationality and so on The application of the Great Law in its manifold aspects is explained in detail, and in unmistakable terms in the *Shanti* and *Anusasana* parvas Bhishma the great stands out as a teacher of Dharma Questions after questions are put to him and he answers them all as he alone can answer

Realisation of Unity of all that lives as the ultimate goal of life is stressed on every possible occasion Hence we are urged to practise the great virtues of compassion, love, friendliness and charity The story of Ushinara and the pigeon should be an object lesson to all of us Reverence for the guru is another virtue exemplified in the story of Ekalavya

Next perhaps only to Sri Krishna the greatest figure in the epic is Bhishma, the great teacher of Dharma, an invincible warrior and an embodiment of all human virtues His vow of celibacy is alone enough to entitle him to a

place of unique honour At every turn this Great Grand Sire warns Duryodhana not to rush to ruin, but his words fall on deaf ears

Yudhishthira is another grand figure We may learn many a truth from his triumphs and defeats, his strength and weaknesses He was a great student of Dharma and on two occasions his proficiency in understanding Dharma is tested Firstly, in *Sabha Parva* Narada proposes a series of questions to him which he answers ably Again in *Vana Parva*, the Yaksha faces him with a number of complex questions (Yakshaprasna) and Yudhishthira is able to answer them all to the satisfaction of the Yaksha. But deep down in his nature lay hidden a certain element of weakness which had to be cured and Sri Krishna managed to bring it out to the surface so that it may be eradicated. We shall revert to this later

Arjuna is another great figure in the epic, a distinctive type, intensely human but always sensitive to the inner promptings of the higher soul, the spiritual intuition in him always alert to act on the slightest whisper of his higher nature The well-known story narrated in the epic in which Duryodhana and Arjuna both go to Sri Krishna for help and while Duryodhana chooses Krishna's army, Arjuna unhesitatingly chooses Krishna's mere company with the definite understanding that Krishna will not take any part in the warfare, this story well illustrates Arjuna's special trait. His love and regard for Sri Krishna is something unique and is revealed in various ways on various occasions That was why he was chosen to be the recipient of the great teaching in the battlefield.

I was referring to some weaknesses in Yudhishthira. He had in his heart of hearts a lingering temptation for gambling However much one may cover up this weakness it is there and will be there till it is rooted out In a great soul like Yudhishthira, even a small blemish has disastrous

consequences This is well illustrated in the episode of the gambling leading to thirteen years of exile Nothing short of this terrific experience could cure Dharmaputra from this weakness He had also another weakness far more subtle and hence more dangerous This also had to be expunged from his character The Lord accomplishes this, though the manner in which the conquest of Yudhishthira over these weaknesses is achieved may appear to be rather drastic But in the case of Yudhishthira nothing short of it would accomplish the object Every human soul striving for superhuman levels has to be tested and found fit before he can be allowed to rise beyond the human kingdom Such tests are seen employed in the lives of all saints and bhaktas This is called usually *Bhakta Pariksha* The Lord arranges for such testing in the case of most of the spiritual aspirants who figure in the story of the great war Let us consider the cases of Arjuna and Yudhishthira While Arjuna passes successfully through the tests prescribed for him, Yudhishthira fails in one of the tests and recognises his failure This recognition of his failure is the crucial point in his inner life and leads to his ultimate triumph

During the eleventh year of the exile, Sri Krishna suggests to Yudhishthira the idea of boldly attacking Duryodhana, defeating him and winning the kingdom A subtle hint is used to test Yudhishthira But Yudhishthira does not yield to the temptation though the suggestion came from the Lord His inner vision revealed the truth and he stood firm He passed the test successfully So also, during the war, Sri Krishna offers to enter the fight himself and defeat the Kaurava army Everyone knew Sri Krishna's vow not to take part in the fight Yudhishthira again saw the trap and stood firm Yet it was this same Yudhishthira who yielded to the persuasion to utter a lie to Drona—not perhaps a *literal* lie, but a lie all the same, a sin all the more deplorable as it was sought to be covered by some

he realises the essential Unity of all Life, and so to him there can be no sense of separateness. He is one with God and so with all life. Ignorance and separateness are only two facets of the same veil which hides Reality from us. True freedom is freedom from the sense of separateness. To put it in a positive way real freedom consists in realising the essential Unity of everything that is Sri Sankaracharya summed it up in one sentence

"The state of non-separateness is alone Moksha."

In our daily life absolute freedom is an impossibilty We have absolute inner freedom undoubtedly, but this freedom expresses itself outwardly as discipline. Freedom and discipline are apparently contradictory, but this contra diction is only superficial, they can go together; in fact they co-exist in the case of advanced human beings

Nowadays, people have fantastic ideas about freedom. Now that India has attained "freedom" people think that they are free to do what they like, that none can curb their liberty In other words they mistake freedom for license. If everyone feels free to do what he likes there will be utter chaos and confusion, every one will jostle against every other, it will be worse than the law of the jungle. This is so obvious and yet we see this misguided idea of freedom in evidence everywhere. People are losing respect for law and order because they think that law restricts their freedom and so can be disregarded. Even traffic rules are ignored because people think that the pub lic road is all for them forgetting that the other person who uses that road has as much liberty to think that the road belongs entirely to him. Cross road cycle conferences have become a common feature in our cities A number of cyclists gather at a road junction and go on talking, they would not give way to a car which has to pass that way; they expect the driver to stop till their conversation

this is really discipline. Which of these has really exercised his freedom? In one case I have become a slave to the desire, in the other case he has resisted the temptation of the object to enslave him It is obvious that the disciplined man has exercised his freedom while the undisciplined person has surrendered his freedom. Disciplined freedom alone is real freedom. When people talk about discipline as an inhibition curtailing one's freedom they miss an important psychological fact. Ordered outer discipline develops an inner strength which alone can ensure our being able to resist the allurements which all the time try to ensnare us, and thus makes for real freedom.

34. Highlights of Indian Culture

Culture has been defined in many ways but all the definitions leave us with a feeling that it is something more. The expression of culture varies in different countries and although the abstract basis is the same, the outward expressions vary widely Russian culture is essentially different from Indian culture or American culture. Culture is the best expression of a nation's soul and every nation has its own distinctive expression. It is essential to have such differences, without such variety life would be drab and monotonous There is, however, no question of superiority or inferiority in such variations

Tolerance, especially in the intellectual field, has always been an outstanding feature of Indian culture. A person was free to think along any line and hold any view of life, there were six systems of philosophy, including even atheism. A man can deny God and be still a Hindu, he was equally free to worship a piece of stone on the wayside. It was an accepted idea that whatever path a person followed, all paths ultimately lead to the same goal. Hence it was that in ancient times there was no thought of conversion

35 Temple Idea and Its Place in Religion

Temple is a common feature of all religions, whether it is called a Church, or a monastery, or a synagogue, or a mosque From long ago man was impressed by the grand eur of the objective world around him, and the roaring thunder-clouds, the mighty mountain peaks and the lofty trees, began to inspire in him a feeling of awe and reverence, and the idea of worship in general and localised worship in particular places emerged. Be it the foot of a tree or a mountain cave that offered him what he wanted, with the idea of worship came in also the idea of a place of worship So we find at all times in the history of man worship of God has gone hand in hand with specialised centres of worship

Religion in general may be said to have three aspects, Theology, Rituals and Mysticism Theology is the specu lative science dealing with the nature and function of God head and it pertains to the thinking nature in man. Rituals on the other hand deal with certain physical processes, which in some mysterious way establish a link between the visible and the invisible In Mysticism, we find the real yearning of the human soul to realise the Supreme, an eternal seeking and expansion. Temples have been closely related to rituals, though one could imagine ritualistic functions taking place outside temples The real nature and purpose of the temple will be understood if we clear the position at the outset in regard to how temples function I am not one of those who think that temples are only the expression of certain vested interests It may be that in the present day temples do not function as efficiently as in days gone by I am more concerned with the temple idea

The personal character of the performer does not play any great part in the efficaciousness of such ceremonies, though a person of high character will be able to put more life into what he does and to that extent the effect will be modified and quality improved. One of the essentials for the proper conduct of such rituals is the proper ordaining of the priest or the bishop Apostolic succession plays a great part in ritualistic processes Even at the outset, some kind of adjustments seems to have been made between certain inner forces (Deva-Agencies) and these occult centres and it looks as if these inner forces can be tapped only by people properly ordained according to the rules of the ritual. Also the certainty of the results accruing therefrom seems to depend to a very large extent on the expertness of the performer in the employment of the physical processes and other ritualistic paraphernalia.

There are certain laws governing the operation of these occult laboratories Just as in an ordinary science laboratory, certain conditions have to be fulfilled before the desired result is achieved, so also in these occult laboratories we have to provide the necessary favourable conditions if we wish to reap good results. For example, for *certain experiments in a laboratory*, light has to be shut out, certain experiments can be performed only in red light, so also in certain manufactures, it is dangerous to allow dust to come into the room, if by chance any dirt or dust gets in, it may lead to explosion and such serious consequences. So also, for certain experiments dealing with high electric power certain physical conditions have to be provided, not only to achieve the desired result, but to avoid danger

Great occult centres like temples stand on a similar footing Certain physical conditions have to be rigidly followed to enable those centres to fulfil their true purpose. Beyond a certain limit, no dirt or filth shall be

their own way and they are still necessary and *useful for* a very large number of people But temples and ceremonies and all that go with them will be left behind if they are going to be obstacles in the way of expansion of the human heart and consciousness, instead of being a help Time was perhaps when they were a necessary help and perhaps even today they are necessary to many, but *nothing shall* stand in the way of the human soul realising the Larger Soul in the Universe and feeling a unity running through all the differences we see around us, in the way of man realising every man and woman to be part of that Larger Self, in the way of feeling a mystic unity with all that lives, because it is this which matters more in religion than ceremonies or philosophies

I do not deny there is a place in Hinduism for shrines, for ceremonies, for physical talismans and all the rest of it, but the emphasis should be on the wider and deeper view of things which naturally should take precedence over other minor considerations I for one would use every help available in my religion for the benefit of the community, just as I may use an electric battery or a telescope I should be foolish if I throw them aside because they do not show me my God at once At the same time, I shall be thrice foolish if I blindly believed that these are my religion and I can realise God only through them.

The future religion seems to me to be a religion of God revealed in the Man In times gone by, we have had God revealed as the Light, as the Sun, as Dharma, as Beauty, as Purity, as Magnificence, as Father, as Son, as Child, but we are now reaching a stage in evolution when God is being revealed to us as Man If we wish to avoid being laid aside as back numbers, we have to sense this great ideal which is coming to be realised as an inevitable anchorage for humanity and help in the consummation of the Ideal To realise God through Man is the new religion

and make him give his best to the country, nay, to the whole world. The whole system of education was based upon these fundamental ideals.

The whole span of man's life was divided into certain great stages corresponding to the larger stages in the growth of human society, and the nation's activities were also grouped under the corresponding heads The original Varna Dharma and Asrama Dharma were based upon these ideals Just as the human embryo reproduces on a small scale the stages through which life had evolved, so in the life of an individual all the experiences of the ancestors were lived again on a small scale. There was what we may call an appreciable parallelism between individual development and racial development.

In the early stages, usually up to the 7th year, no parti cular attempt was made to "impart" education to the child Then began the period of studentship—Brahmacharya. The age at which this commenced depended upon the equip- ment and temperament of the pupil. In the case of the intellectually advanced student it usually began in the 8th year but in other cases it began at the 11th or 12th year The period of studentship proper extended over 9 to 48 years according as the pupil wanted to master a part of the scriptures only or acquire all knowledge. It was after completing the student life that one was allowed to enter married life. The instruction received by the students included not only cultural and academic subjects but items of knowledge having a distinct bearing upon the life he had to lead as a Grihastha. Then came the later stage when he withdrew from the worldly activity and devoted himself to service on a larger scale along spiritual lines

With regard to the subjects taught to the pupils, there was a good deal of variety The student's individual pre dilections played a great part in the subjects taught to him

of space to move about and there was very little of any big structure in those times. As pupils, distinctions of rank were not recognised. King or peasant, boy or girl, had the same kind of treatment. We hear of princes being sent to their preceptors' houses. Sri Rama went with Viswamitra to learn the use of the weapons Sri Krishna had his tutelage under Rishi Sandeepani. Even in later times when the University at Taxila was very famous and drew crowds of students into its portals, princes from far-off cities used to come there.

Teachers and pupils lived together all day and all night. The physical body of the pupils was kept active and healthy by the regular physical services they had to render to their teachers They got up very early in the morning, had their prayers, went out and had their bath, and for this they had generally to walk a long distance. They washed their own clothes and those of the teachers also, then they went round and begged alms, and thus the life was so ordered that there was ample scope for the healthy development of the physical side of the pupils.

The teacher in ancient India was very much respected for his learning. He was usually one who was well versed in various branches of knowledge, and commanded the respect of all people. His personality was usually remarkable, and those who passed through his hands had the distinct mark of his personality stamped on them. The contact of the pupils with such a teacher evoked the high est emotions in them. The whole atmosphere was pure, serene and high. The spirit of service and comradeship was developed in the students to a remarkable degree and the living example of the teacher went a very long way towards the achievement of this object. As for intellectual development, the method adopted by the ancient teacher was in some respects different from that which obtains in modern times. They paid very great attention to memory,

to exist great Universities — the Universities of Taxila, Nalanda, Vikramasila, Navadweepa, and so on

The Universities in ancient India were entirely residential It was considered that a University should contain at least 21 Professors well versed in Philosophy, Theology and Law, pupils were given free tuition, free boarding, and students who went to an educational institution — be he a king or a peasant — lived and boarded together

Then, a word on the great Universities of ancient India Ashramas, Viharas and Parishads were great centres of culture and attracted large numbers One is surprised to read of the very large numbers that crowded to a single University The University of Vikramasila accommodated 8,000 people They speak of Kulapatis in those times, the technical meaning of the word is 'one who feeds and teaches 10,000 students' Kanva was one such Kalidasa speaks of the various kinds of knowledge taught and learnt under the guidance of Kanva There was no problem of accommodation in those times The sages lived in forests and there was plenty of room to move about, there was no jostling of any kind, one never felt cramped They speak of 500 as the number of students who can learn under a Professor, and we may take it to mean that the students went into groups of 500 for purposes of study of a special branch of knowledge presided over by a Professor One is struck with amazement when one hears of the famous University of Takshasila (modern Taxila) Historians are never tired of showering eulogies on it To go to Taxila was to complete education and without it no education was complete The Jatakas are full of references to Taxila— over 100 in fact We glean a good many details about it from them Mention is made of world-renowned Professors who taught the three Vedas, the Kalas, Shilpa, Archery, and so on King Kosala and Jivaka, the famous physicians, were students of the University, the latter learning medi

I do not propose to deal with later Universities, though several great centres sprang into existence after the Moghuls established themselves in this land and became patrons of learning

India had a glorious past and had an excellent system of education—Elementary, Secondary and University It is not at the present time possible to order everything on the lines which obtained in old times But it is possible (and to my mind it seems to be necessary, if India is to make her distinct contribution to humanity), to organise our educational system on the basis of the ideals which our ancients so jealously guarded. It is no use trying to imitate the western systems, there may be no harm in assimilating them, especially their form side, into our fabric, but the essential basis must be rooted in our inherent genius and traditions Let me conclude by mentioning what seem to me to be the points we might have in our mind in developing any educational system in India "The veneration for learning, the taking it as a vocation, the simple life of the student, the loyalty to duty, the recognition of Dharma", these adapted to present-day conditions will alone make for a good, rational, national system of education.

37 The Message of the Bhagavad Gita to Modern Man

GITA NOT ONLY A PHILOSOPHY BUT A CODE OF CONDUCT

Gita consists of the teaching given to the pupil Arjuna by Lord Shri Krishna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra when the pupil, at the critical moment when the war was about to commence, was in doubt as to whether he was to follow the promptings of his personal affection and reverence for those on the opposite side or follow the dictates of duty In unequivocal terms the Lord asks Arjuna

as we understand them In that Mind the past, the present and the future exist together as an Eternal Now It is true that ultimately that Plan will be fulfilled, but the Time factor is elastic Evolution towards that Consummation may be quickened or retarded by man Secondly, God has given man a very precious gift and that is free will Theoretically man can set his will against God's Will This free will is provided for in the Plan It happens that at times man makes such a mess of things here that some special intervention is necessary to redeem the situation Hence the need for Avataras

Who incarnates as an Avatara? The work of carrying on the work of the Universe is in the hands of Vishnu, the Second Logos In the Divine Government of the Universe there is a Department, if I may use the word, which is in charge of this duty Some Great One from this department will come as an Avatara Whosoever comes will be called Vishnu, because He comes from Vishnu's department as his Deputy At times some minor officer of this branch may come, it all depends on the nature and magnitude of the work to be done In Hindu religion they speak of the ten major Avataras and also of other minor Avataras

How does the manifestation take place? Here we are on rather uncertain ground There are various ways and grades of manifestation, from inspiration and over-shadowing to full possession of the body in which the manifestation takes place, Hinduism speaks of kalavatara, amsavatara, poornavatara, avesha and so on On looking into the matter deeply and rationally, one may venture to say that almost all the Avataras have been only aveshas If we study carefully the Avataras we shall see that, in the life-period of the Avatara, the special work for which the manifestation came, does not take the whole period, it is only on certain specific occasions that the need for the manifestation arises It will be too much to expect a Great

make these latent faculties, divine attributes, patent and active.

One of the most prominent attributes of Divinity is FREE WILL. The Divine is said to have the power to do (kartum) to undo (akartum) to modify (anyat-kartum) In other words He is omnipotent, He can do anything. Now the human Monad, because he is essentially divine has this free will in him. In the earlier stages, we do not find much evidence of that free will But as time goes on he develops his free will. It is in the exercise of this free will that the whole object and the whole meaning of evolution lie If there were no free will what could be the meaning of human evolution? Where is the sense of responsibility? If we have no free choice, we are not responsible, we become puppets Surely the object of all this evolution is not to deal with mere puppets! We are divine and we are going to be perfectly divine, completely divine, absolutely divine one of these days That is why we are here.

But in manifestation we work under certain natural laws the laws of Nature. In the initial stages when we observe these laws which are inviolable, irrevocable, immutable, impersonal the same for X Y and Z, we feel so helpless Everything works out according to law We cannot do anything We cannot interfere with anything But presently we learn that, because of these very immutable irrevocable laws, we are safe secure and free from anxiety If, for example, a stone thrown in the air were to fall to the ground today and fly to the heavens tomorrow, if today fire burns and tomorrow it chills, then there would be absolute confusion In fact our safety, our sense of security, our sense of certainty are possible because the laws of God or Nature are immutable, irrevocable, inviolable.

One of these laws is called the Law of Causation or the Law of Karma, or the Law of Action and Reaction

and that even great Rishis and Munis and Avataras cannot undo Prarabdha karma You can do what you like only with what is left over But I believe and say that even with regard to this there is no finality In Tamil, they use the word *vidutthasharam*, a very expressive word, for *Prarabdha karma* Suppose you have a bow and an arrow Now, as long as you have not sent out the arrow, it is left to you to choose its direction and velocity but once the arrow has left the bow it is *Vidutthasharam* it is an arrow which has left the bow That is the meaning of it It is done it is finished, it goes, you cannot do anything with that—Prarabdha karma is like that But if we have sufficient knowledge of practical dynamics, we will take another arrow and send it after the first arrow with such velocity and in such a direction that it will impinge upon the earlier arrow and make it go in any direction we like It is open to us to do so, and I believe there are cases where even Prarabdha karma has been manipulated by a strong will But, for this we require knowledge as to how to handle a subsequent arrow, so that the effect of the first arrow may be changed That is why, in the Gita the Lord says that the man who knows, the jnani, burns all these things to ashes—a phrase which people ordinarily interpret to mean that he can wipe away all his karma He can burn them into ashes, not wipe them away He converts them to ashes in jnanagni in the fire of his knowledge We can all do that, theoretically it is possible for any person to take himself in hand, burn out all his liabilities and all that binds him, and go as a free man to his ultimate goal

Verily man is the creator of his destiny, or to use the words of one of the Three Great Truths given to us

Each man is his own absolute lawgiver the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself, the decreer of his life h reward his punishment"

wisdom to use his knowledge properly Knowledge is not Wisdom. As a poet would have it.

"Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
Have oft times no connection. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men,
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much,
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more."

It has, however, to be remembered that science had no idea of bringing about any such radical changes in the old views of God and religion, it was not out deliberately to create these conditions, it concerned itself only with its progress along its restricted path. Nor were all the scientists bent on creating this irreligion so to say Some of them, Newton included, were religious-minded, and some were, idealists But their work and the theories they propounded produced this violent change in the world-picture, as an inevitable consequence. In the life of the ordinary man of intelligence religion and all it stood for ceased to play any part. The "Modern Man", the legacy of this viewpoint, has been thus described by a poet

"Love exists not and Intellect bites him like a snake,
For he has failed to subordinate Intellect to Intuition,
He has traced the stars in their courses
But has failed to pick his way in the domain of his own thoughts,

He has got so entangled in the mazes of his knowledge
That he is yet unable to distinguish profit from loss!
He has ensnared the rays of the sun,
But failed to illuminate the dark night of his life!"

But the achievements of science are remarkable, it has widened the vista of man's knowledge and increased his powers over the forces of Nature, it has added much to

linked together in one great brotherhood. This is a fact in nature Unless the future civilisation is based on a recognition of this great Law there is no future for us and our civilisation will crumble to pieces And already great thinkers in various fields of human activity have begun to glimpse this new ideal, scientists like Einstein, Eddington Jeans feel the utter futility of the so-called scientific view They feel that the so-called material world is a Great Thought and the Thinker is a pure mathematician. The old concepts regarding matter, life and mind are being given up, it is found that matter can be converted into energy and vice versa

As against the old idea of a purposeless world they begin to see a purpose and a plan. Here is what Dr Kenneth Walker, Professor, Royal College of Surgeons, says in his book Human Physiology

Science is laying more and more emphasis on the oneness of life and on the interdependence of all living creatures Life on the surface of the planet may be looked upon as a whole and not as an accidental collection of isolated individuals Life is essentially the same, whether it be the life of a flower or the life of a dictator Theological forms of thought are eschewed by all scientists, but it is impossible to study science without being filled with a sense of plan Life on this planet cannot be an accident, the result of the interplay of blind forces Somewhere there exists a plan, even though the limitations of the human mind make it impossible to grasp it. Life on the earth serves some great purpose and consciousness fits into some scheme '

There is to be a new revelation, not necessarily from outside, but from ourselves, the intuitional aspect, the love aspect in us must reveal itself more and more, the estrangement between the head and the heart has brought about

and joy to another Why, even the same thing may bring comfort or discomfort to one and the same person according to circumstances, for example, warm clothing which is uncomfortable in summer, may bring great comfort in winter It all depends on how an individual reacts to a given set of circumstances From this point of view the duality of joy and suffering, of happiness and misery, of comfort and discomfort ceases to have any objective validity

We live under certain irrevocable, inviolable, absolute laws of nature in manifestation We have also our free will without this free will there can be no question of responsibility, no morality or Ethics, no idea of good and bad of right and wrong and so on This free will is apt to react in varying ways to the different laws of nature. When it reacts in consonance with the laws, the experience is joy When it reacts against these laws, there is suffering. Suffering is due, really, to our not living in harmony with the laws of nature. In the inviolability of these laws lies our safety We can utilize or manipulate these laws so as to produce any pre-meditated effect, because we are certain of the working of the laws Are we not using the law of gravity to enable us to fly? We get more knowledge and therefore more power as we study and understand these laws, and our free will may be used to derive maximum joy and satisfaction by working in hamony with these laws It is all a question of being in tune or out of tune with the laws of nature And the most fundamental Law, the Basic Law of the Universe, of which the other laws are only partial phases, is the Law of Unity Any one who lives in tune with this Law is assured of pure joy

42 Conquest of Desire

Generally speaking, there are two ways of dealing with human desires We often come across certain types of

Such cases are not rare On the way to the ship an accident may occur and the person kept back. I know definitely of several cases when at the last moment something happens and the person is prevented from being involved in such a mass disaster If, however, some person chances to be on the ship whose *prarabdha* does not provide for dying in shipwreck, the Lords of Karma or Their agents in charge will find out if there is any piece of karma in the person's stock-karma (called the *sanchita-karma*) which can be worked out by such a drowning, and if there is any such karma they will just let the person get drowned and carry over the unexhausted part of his *prarabdha* karma to the stock-karma from which to choose future *prarabdha* karma But if there is no such piece of karma available in the person's stock-karma that person will *somehow* be saved, though the escape may seem to be miraculous Such miraculous escapes are on record in abundance.

In this connection let me quote what Dr Besant says on this matter

"The fact is that the period of life under physical conditions *is* fixed, the period of striking off the physical body is *not* fixed At one point or another death may come There will be times when, because of the karma, death cannot be averted, but there may be other periods when an added force may turn it away like any other kind of karma There are points that are certain, and there are those that may be varied by exertion

" : But the whole life under physical conditions is a fixed period and if he passes out of earthly life before that period is fulfilled on the physical plane, he has to live on for the remainder of it under what you may call partly earth-life conditions in the astral world His physical body has been struck away before the life period is over But the normal period after death only begins when that earthly life-period is exhausted, that is the point you have to remember "

of life is active all the time As Lord Sri Krishna says in Canto II of the Gita, "Nothing can remain inactive even for an instant." But all this is not karma which is under the operation of the "Law of Karma" When we speak of karma we generally refer only to that action—using this word in its most general sense of any impulse—in which an individual or a group of individuals is involved, for which there is a reaction If anyone is not personally involved (that is, has no attachment, *sanga*) in an act, then the reaction of that act does not affect him The forces generated by that act are there undoubtedly, but they go into a general reservoir which takes in such forces and is in charge of the Nirmanakayas who use that storehouse of energy for purposes of Their own The great Adepts are engaged in "action" all the time but as They are not personally entangled in any such action there is no karmic reaction on them When one engages oneself in action without any attachment to it or without getting personally entangled in it there cannot be any *personal* reaction

Similarly, automatic action of the organs of a human body does not necessarily involve any karmic reaction on the individual The only action which comes under the operation of the Law of Karma is that which is deliberately done by an individual, to which he is personally attached and through which he hopes to achieve some result So, generally and theoretically speaking, the action of a person—this applies to group or mass consciousness also *mutadis mutandis*—may fall under three heads (i) the automatic and instinctive action of his vehicles under the impulses set going by the first and second outpourings from the Third and Second Logoi, (ii) the action motivated by the person's individual will or desire or thought with a view to achieve a personal purpose, and (iii) action performed as sacrifice, as a matter of duty or as an offering to the Lord or the Master, action done out of Love for

others, done because he cannot help doing good to man kind, as the Great Ones are doing all the time Of these three, the first and the last go into what we may call general storehouse and only the second category comes under the operation of the Law of Karma The first cate gory is common to all and so may be left out of our present consideration In the case of the ordinary man of the world with very little spiritual leaning, the second cate gory dominates and there is very little of the third cate gory As a man evolves, more and more of what he does comes into the third category, until he reaches a stage when he becomes free from any attachment to or entangle ment in whatever he does Thereafter there is nothing to bind him to any act, he becomes free, becomes a *Mukta* a liberated one Not that he does not act, on the contrary he is ever so much more active than before But he is no more under the bondage of the law of personal karma not bound to the wheel of births and deaths The indivi dual karma-ledger, so to say, exists only so long as he acts in his individual capacity When he has ceased to be 'I" and identifies himself with the One Life there is no personal ledger anymore for him *He becomes "karmaless*

Now there are one or two interesting problems which come up in this connection We are told that the Law of Karma being a Divine Law is inviolable and absolute Of course this is true When it comes to a matter of applying this Divine Law to human life there are various factors that come into operation which are all provided for in the Divine Law but some of which are likely to be forgotten by us when we deal with the application of the Law to individual cases *A* borrows from *B* two hunderd rupees which are paid by *B* in two currency notes of hundred rupees denomination *A* has to repay *B* sooner or later If the law of compensation is applied mechanically and literally *A* has to pay back the loan in the same shape i e in two hundred rupee notes (Of course here I am not

taking into consideration any interest) This interpretation is obviously far-fetched and absurd The loan may be repaid in various ways *A* may pay the same in full quickly—this is at times called "ready-money karma"—or pay it in small instalments within a certain period or may pay it later In any case *A* will have to pay back the loan, if not in this life, in some future life The manner in which the karmic debt is discharged is not rigidly prescribed There is a good deal of elasticity about the matter Again, the question may come up whether *A* himself should repay the loan to *B* Suppose *A* does some good turn to *C* and *C* in turn undertakes to repay *A*'s debt to *B* himself Will not such an arrangement meet the needs of the law of compensation?

This incidentally raises the question of vicarious karma This is too important a topic to be dealt with incidentally here. In any case we may take it that the actual working out of the law of karma in individual cases allows of great latitude and no one can be dogmatic about it. C W L gives two instances to illustrate this point "The school-boy who mischievously pinches a classmate will certainly not have to meet that classmate a thousand years hence under other skies in order to be pinched by him in return " Then again, "A man who murders another may conceivably sometimes himself be murdered in turn in another incarnation, but he can cancel the karma much more satisfactorily if he happens to have an opportunity in the next incarnation of saving the life of his former victim at the cost of his own It would seem that sometimes he may cancel it without losing his own at all, " I have quoted these two extreme cases to show the great elasticity of the Law in its actual working

Another question may arise in this connection, however academic or abstract or hypothetical it may seem The question may be stated thus A person has a karmic

debt still to discharge Is it absolutely necessary that he should discharge it in full before he reaches the Goal? I have designedly used the word "absolutely", because generally (in 99 999 per cent of cases) the law requires it But the real point is whether there can be exceptions Is it possible for the karmic debt of an individual to be taken over or shared by others? Is it possible at all for a karmic debt to be excused or condoned or cancelled? Here we are dealing with exceptional cases, people will be foolish if they forget that very important point In the case of a disciple who has been drawn very close to his Master, it might happen that, in the interests of higher and more universal work the Master takes over the disciple s karma and releases him for some higher work which he would have found impossible to do with that karmic debt hanging round his neck like a millstone In this case the Master will suitably deal with that piece of karma in consultation with the Lords of Karma and the [illegible] So also in the case of [illegible] who has genuinely surrendered himself [illegible] [illegible] absolved [illegible] [illegible] himself [illegible] [illegible] devotee s debts In the [illegible] 22 [illegible] the [illegible] of the *Gita*, the Lord guarantees [illegible] [illegible] exceptional cases he will himself [illegible] the [illegible] karmic adjustments But such [illegible] are [illegible] rare [illegible] practical purposes [illegible] [illegible]

As regards [illegible] possibility of sharing one s [illegible] others the idea need not [illegible] startlin[illegible] because in the group-soul every member [illegible] his [illegible]ma with every other We came from the group soul condition to our present individualized condition, and finally when we realis[illegible] the Unity of Life we shall be sharing what we have and what we are, with everyone else But even before that stage

is reached there seems to be the possibility of an individual sharing his karma with others (We might have heard of the 'twin-soul" theory, but I do not propose to deal with it here) Mr C. Jinarajadasa in his book *The Seven Veils Over Consciousness* referring to a letter from the Master Serapis (letter No 19 in *Letters From the Masters of the Wisdom*, Second Series) in which the Master speaks of the union of two souls, says, " their karmas interblend It is as if the two karmas were two tanks joined by a pipe If the level in one rises, the level in the other rises also till both are at the same level' The implication is obvious If this is true of two souls, then theoretically it is possible for more than two karmas to be inter connected so that all the karma-tanks keep the same level Here again we have ever to keep in mind that we are dealing with very rare and exceptional cases Barring such cases we may take it that the usual ideas about the application of the Law of Karma hold good

44 The Lord Buddha

Today, 2,500 years after the Maha-Parinirvana of the Lord Buddha, the world is ringing with thoughts of the life and teachings of the Enlightened One The Buddha Jayanti celebrations have focussed the attention of humanity on the significance of the great sermons of the Blessed One who has been acclaimed as the first flower in our tree of humanity In the process of evolution of the universe from the mineral to the plant and animal stage and on to the human, there were two souls who were always ahead of all the others In one Love was dominant, while in the other it was Wisdom In the Occult Hierarchy a selection had to be made to fill the post of the Buddha who was in charge of the religious instruction of the world, an office till then held by Kāshyapa, a Great One from

Venus The candidate chosen was He known to us as Gautama Siddhartha, One in whom the Wisdom-Love was personified As Bodhisatwa, he took the vow before Kashyapa to work his way up and to equip himself for the great office of the Buddha He came to the world several times as Vyasa in India, as Hermes in Egypt as Zarathushtra in Persia and as Orpheus in Greece. When the time came for his elevation to the high office of Buddha he chose to be born in Kapilavastu with Suddhodana and Maya as the parents

One great significant feature about the Lord Buddha is the amount of authentic, reliable, historical data available about his life and activities apart from mere traditions The main incidents of his life are quite well known unlike in the case say of Shankara

Now what is the significance of the Lord Buddha to the world in general and to us in India in particular? It looks as though the Lord Buddha never intended to found a new religion When he was born, the general tendency was to regard the world as a vale of sorrow and there was a feeling of escapism an anxiety for liberation and this was sought to be achieved through contemplation severe austerities and infliction of pain on the physical body by fasting and so on Prince Siddhartha also followed the same line till he swooned under the Bodhi tree When however he awoke from this faint he was the Buddha the Enlightened One, a personality quite different from the one that had swooned The difference between the two is very marked From then on the Lord Buddha struck a new path cutting away from the old moorings and blazing a new trail, presenting a new view of eternal truths and a new way of approach to life's problems

The Teachings of the Lord Buddha were the natural outcome of the paths followed earlier The central theme

of his teaching was "Follow the Middle Path" He reiterated the teachings of the Gita in regard to Yoga and pointed out that extremes were not suited to our needs There had been a shifting from one point to another in the ultimate goal of Hinduism A section regarded Moksha as the ultimate ideal, while another regarded Immortality, Deathlessness or Amritattva as the goal The former laid emphasis on getting away from the body This was regarded as a negative approach and the importance of discipline, control of body, ascetic life etc, was overstressed In the second alternative the emphasis shifted to Immortality There was a deep cleavage between these two ways of thought when the Lord Buddha came As one having experienced luxury and austerity, pleasure and pain, the Lord Buddha felt that the proper solution was a commonsense approach through the middle course, a balanced life through the Noble Eightfold Path

There is a view that in all his teachings the Lord Buddha did not mention God This was because He was born a Hindu and took God for granted He never felt it necessary to mention God particularly He did not bother about metaphysical disquisitions He never presumed he was founding a religion His was a reformed, reasonable, and tolerant presentation of Hinduism with stress on the ethical side. The Eightfold Path and the Panch Shila were guides to the life here, based on a presumption of all the metaphysics of Hinduism His teachings can best be understood and appreciated only when taken along with the fundamental tenets of Hinduism with which they were closely integrated His message, constituting a code of conduct in everyday life, went directly to the hearts of men

Some have held that the Lord Buddha was concerned with only the negative aspect of life which he considered as full of sorrow His Four Noble Truths, it was held, represent only a partial view But this is closing our eyes to

the fact that joy can be squeezed out of sorrow too Sorrow and bitter experience give us a firmer grip of life and develop newer and greater faculties in us The Lord Buddha only re-emphasized the lessons of the ancient scripture that if one was impersonal and did not get entangled in any situation joy could be got out of sorrow He was concerned with relating even sorrow to daily life and so gave His Five Principles laying emphasis on the ethical side.

The teachings of the Blessed One are as vital today as they were twenty-five centuries ago and provide a wonderful code of conduct for a humanity in travail His purity and tenderness in the words of Sir Edwin Arnold united the truest princely qualities with the intellect of a sage and the passionate devotion of a martyr As Lama Anagarika Govinda has said His message of love and compassion has opened the hearts of men His wisdom of the Middle Path has freed their minds The practice of meditation has helped to unite their faculties of heart and mind and has created that self-discipline and insight into the innermost nature of man and this has made Buddhism a world religion and one of the profoundest influences on the cultural life of humanity

45 The Yoga of Business

The title may startle the readers The juxtaposition of the two words may seem queer Generally in India we associate Yoga with Sannyasis with saffron robes with retreating to forest with doing miracles and so on It would appear as if yoga can have nothing to do with business which is entirely mundane because yoga indicates other-worldliness and business indicates getting immersed in essentially practical material things But such a view is based upon an erroneous conception of what yoga stands for

Yoga literally means union, and practically it means that which helps human soul to achieve union with the Over-Soul In this view there cannot be anything inconsistent between yoga and business God is the best businessman He is the eternal Actor Nothing in this manifested world is outside Him According to the Gita, "having created this universe He lives and moves in His creation" If one seeks union with the Great Builder, he has to train himself to be like Him down here All the slip shodness which one would expect from the erroneous view of yoga above referred to will disappear If only we shall do everything as unto Him or to please Him or in a manner which will be, however faintly, similar to how He does things, all our actions down here will be characterized by striking orderliness, remarkable efficiency and amazing enthusiasm That is why the Lord said in the Gita that Yoga is verily "skill in action"

The first essential thing in Yoga is to recognise that we cannot escape from this world We have to be here and achieve the highest, and that is certainly possible People have achieved it in the past, why should we not achieve now? It is not so much the magnitude of the thing that we do that counts, but *how* we do it It is the attitude of mind which you apply to a piece of work which makes you a Yogi The Bhagavad Gita is verily a gospel of action It gives us a code of conduct which takes in its big sweep the extreme other-worldliness of India and the incessant physical activity of the West A story is told that, when a Sannyasi could not learn his lessons in Yoga, he was directed to learn it from a butcher A superficial thinker may think that a butcher's shop was the last place to learn Yoga When Arjuna wanted to know the characteristic attributes of a Yogi, he asked the Lord, "What is he like? How does he speak, how does he sit, how does he walk?" and so on The inference is obvious We must be able to recognize a Yogi in all these things

like Tiruvalluvar, a barber like Sena can achieve perfection, then why not a businessman be a Yogi too? In whatever walk of life we are engaged, we can do our work like a Yogi

How then to do business as a Yogi? Yoga does not mean that you should give away everything or break all the laws of monetary transaction It means only that you do things carefully and with a kind and sympathetic attitude. Make sure that you do not waste unnecessarily, that you do not deceive people, but deal fairly with every one who has business relations with you Perhaps if you bring in the quality of a Yogi into business you will be a more successful businessman Courtesy, fairplay, efficiency, alertness and method will make for successful business and these are the very essentials which will go to make a Yogi

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